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CONTENTS

	Page
COMMENTS	1
TWO YEARS' GRACE	3
SILVER IMPERIALISM. By R. H. S. Crossman	3
A TALK WITH THE MAYOR. By Lionel Fielden	4
CARRY ON, CARILLON. By Sagittarius	4
A LONDON DIARY. By Critic	5
THIS ENGLAND	5
ADVANCE IN EDUCATION. By J. Mackay-Mure	6
PERMANENT MOORINGS. By Stephen Simmons	6
PEOPLE: PARISIANS. By Tom Harrisson	7
W. C. FIELDS. By J. B. Priestley	8
THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT:	Page
Theatres. By Stephen Potter	8
The Movies. By William Whitebait	9
Radio Notes. By Edward Sackville West	9
CORRESPONDENCE	10
From Aiden Crawley, M.P.; K. Zilliacus, M.P.; C. Bourdet; K. C. Younger, M.P.; Will Lawther; S. V. Sturtz; J. B. Brown; and John C. Sharp.	
BOOKS IN GENERAL. By Alan Pryce-Jones	13
REVIEWS:	Page
The Wrong Kind of Nonsense. By W. J. H. Sprott	14
The Engineers. By G. D. H. Cole	14
A Fifth Gospel. By E. E. Kellett	15
Up the Republic. By Frank O'Connor	16
Old Slavery Days. By Gamel Woolsey	16
The Problem of Japan. By Max Bickerton	17
SHORTER NOTICE	18
WEEK-END COMPETITIONS	18

THE TURN OF THE YEAR

THE Tory press has condemned 1946 as a year of austerity, bureaucracy and frustration, and greeted 1947 with the vague hope of a return to better times. Its judgment on the past is as ill-founded as its hopes for the future. There is no prospect of any return to the system which the Lords Rothermere, Beaverbrook and Kemsley recollect with such regret. When history comes to be written, last year will be remembered for the establishment of the principle that it is the task of the State—in peacetime as well as in war—to provide jobs and security for all. This principle was still condemned as Utopian propaganda in 1939 when there were a million unemployed despite a huge rearmament programme. To-day, after 18 months of Labour Government, it is so firmly established that we tend to see its difficulties and forget its benefits.

The true measure of 1946 is a comparison with 1920, the year of soaring prices, unemployed demonstrations and strikes on the one side, and, on the other, the ostentatious extravagance of a small and privileged money class. Life may indeed be bleak for those who look back with nostalgia to the post-war years when chronic unemployment and low wages prevented the majority of our countrymen from buying what they needed and so removed the need for rationing and controls of distribution. In 1946, new houses were built almost exclusively for those who needed them most—the working classes; interest rates were forced down for the benefit of the local authorities and to the detriment of the rentiers; milk was drunk daily by every school child, depriving the better-off of their cream and Stilton cheese. In brief, there was a Labour Government in power, elected primarily by the wage earner and acting primarily in his interest. Hence the unique record of the Government in by-elections, despite a hostile press which assumes that its readers belong to the propertied class.

Next year the Government will be faced with the serious problem of providing an incentive, not only to the worker under full employment, but to management under a planned economy and a level of taxation which reduces the value of promotion. Last year's record of legislative advance towards nationalisation gives reason for confidence that the carrot which it will offer to the middle-class donkey will not be a return to private enterprise, but a fair share of the benefit of a planned society. If to the new free medical service there can be added genuine free education for all—which means public schools equal in quality to the Public School—the present heavy burden on the professional classes will be sensibly reduced by Socialist policy.

When we turn to foreign affairs, the picture is more confused. In the Far East the Government's record is good. Here the war had accelerated the awakening of national and democratic forces which threatened the whole relationship of the White and coloured peoples. The Cabinet acted with courage. In Indonesia a difficult task of conciliation has been accomplished. In Malaya and Burma really dangerous situations are being wisely met by speedy concessions. In India the Government has done everything possible to prevent catastrophe; and if, as is only too likely, civil war develops and compels a British evacuation, that is preferable to a futile attempt to restore a White Raj.

West of Suez, any independent Socialist policy in countries such as Palestine, Greece and Spain has been submerged in the strategic conflicts of East and West. The U.S.S.R., finding that its effort to divide Britain from America had the natural result of binding them more closely together, began some six weeks ago a sudden switch of policy; concessions were also made on the Anglo-American side. As a result, the Foreign Ministers were able to complete the Satellite peace treaties, and the Assembly to frame (albeit in general terms) a disarmament resolution. For his part in these achievements the Foreign Secretary deserves his share of praise.

But it would be idle to foster the illusion that all the obstacles to peace-making have now been removed. Whatever the statesmen may say, 1947 begins with the world still divided into two Blocs, and with Western Europe a no man's land between them. We do not doubt the sincerity of Mr. Bevin's desire to stand midway between Russia and America and to develop an independent British policy. But two official announcements this week indicate how far he has been driven from this central position. The United States Army Air Force stated on Tuesday that agreement had been reached with the R.A.F. for wartime co-operation to continue—including joint training schemes and exchange of personnel. Pooling of research will go "just as far as either side wants it to go"; and increased standardisation and the training of R.A.F. pilots in atomic bombing "are not excluded." Despite the *Daily Herald*, this is no more a step "towards the complete internationalisation of air research" than the closer co-operation achieved last year between the Soviet and the Polish Air Forces. Each is indistinguishable from a military Entente.

The Middle Eastern oil agreement is equally noteworthy. Doubtless it brings many advantages to this country. We obtain American assistance in the necessary capital development of these vast oil reserves, and the agreement enables us to earn some much needed dollars. But it is disturbing that all this was settled without any consultation with the French, who are vitally interested in the Mosul oilfields. This is bound to deepen the suspicion that the deal is a piece of Anglo-American power politics, and make even more difficult the Anglo-French understanding which must be the basis of an independent British policy *vis-à-vis* the Communist and American Blocs.

In these circumstances the visit of Field-Marshal Montgomery to Moscow is enigmatic. Does the Field-Marshal take with him detailed proposals for co-operation between the British and the Red Army similar to those recently discussed in Washington? Will it be followed up by other visits to explore the possibility of co-operation in contested areas like the Middle East? Does the Cabinet intend to start similar conversations with the French? These are the questions whose answers will determine whether 1947 will lay the foundations of Two Worlds in conflict or One World at peace.

The Atom and the Veto

It is easy to write down Russia's attitude to the Baruch Plan for the control of atomic energy as "obstructive." Many people—and most Americans—will ask why the U.S.S.R., having agreed that no Power should have the right to obstruct by veto the working of the international agencies for control and inspection, should boggle at the principle that sanctions should be applied automatically against any violator of the terms of the proposed Atomic Treaty. Any nation which adopts this attitude exposes itself to the charge that its intentions are guilty; and on paper the logic of the Baruch Plan is beyond dispute. Actually, however, the issue is much more complicated. For debating purposes the Soviet argument is that it is an essential part of the Charter of the United Nations that all action must be conditional on unanimity of the Great Powers—a view from which neither Britain nor the U.S.A. dissents. But though the Russians may genuinely fear that "tampering with the Charter" by eliminating veto rights in the case of atomic energy might lead ultimately to the abandonment of the whole principle of unanimity, the real cleavage between their standpoint and that of the Americans is on a much more practical issue. As matters stand, the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. each possess one great strategic advantage—on the one side, monopoly of the atomic bomb; on the other, space, dispersal, and a cast-iron Security system. Neither party is in fact willing to give up its own advantage in advance of reciprocal action by the other. The Americans claim the right to retain exclusive possession of the atomic bomb until the U.S.S.R. has been internationally "inspected and controlled"—a process which would reveal the location of all Russia's carefully concealed munition plants and defences. The Russian reply is to say: "If you want to be sure that we are not making atomic bombs, we must be first sure that you will not use your bombs against us when you have discovered where they can most effectively be dropped." This is the real crux of the matter; and, until it is solved, it is academic to argue whether agreement on automatic sanctions against "atomic violation" would in practice be much more effective than the provisions embodied in the Covenant of the old League for automatic sanctions against aggression in general. The time of the Atomic Energy Commission has not been wholly wasted; it has at least shown that a workable scheme of international control can be devised. For the moment, the Baruch Plan must be regarded as in suspense; but this is not the end of hopes of disarmament. The Security Council's next business must be to consider the proposals which the Russians are tabling for an agreed international reduction of armed forces, beginning with prohibition of specific weapons of mass destruction.

De Gaulle and the Parties

General de Gaulle, true to the conventions of the American political system he so much admires, has now announced that he does not intend to offer himself for the office of President. He repeats his criticisms of the Fourth Republic. The democratic political parties "as they now exist among our people," he says, are incapable of solving the imperial or internal problems of France. But does the General, who has great ambitions, really intend to stand aside and to watch passively the election of another man to the post he covets and considers his due? Five years is a long time to wait. If in those years the democratic regime is stabilised, the General's jeremiad will be refuted and he himself perhaps forgotten. Having set himself against the new constitution, he must hope and—unless he proves unexpectedly retiring—work for its failure. He will, consequently, await the call which will, in a national emergency, make him once more the leader of France. If the Right had been more successful at the last elections, that summons might have been made already. It is still possible that a bare majority might be rallied for him at the ballot for the President in the middle of this month, and that he might, with the necessary show of reluctance, consent to be "drafted." But it is much more probable that M. Herriot will be chosen. The voting for the presidency of the Council of the Republic last week showed that the M.R.P. candidate was elected only with the votes of the *Rassemblement des Gauches*, and these would certainly go to M. Herriot rather than to de Gaulle if the occasion arose. The same is true of the Chamber. But once the question of the Presidency is settled, there still remains the problem of the new Cabinet. Is M. Blum to go on with his gallant but seemingly hopeless experiment? Or is there to be a new crisis in which no agreement is reached? Only de Gaulle and the reaction in France profit by delay and confusion. Moreover, from an international standpoint, it is of prime importance that France should enter on the forthcoming Big Four discussions of the German problem with a stable administration in office. Without waiting for the Conference France has "jumped the gun" by including the Saar within the customs area of the French Republic. That M. Blum has taken this action with the full support of all French parties indicates the distrust which Frenchmen feel for both Anglo-American and Russian policies in Germany. It also underlines the urgent need for Anglo-French conversations before the formal discussions on the future of the Reich begin next March.

Coal Ballyhoo

Nothing could be more childish, or perhaps dishonest, than the "new coal crisis" invented by most of the newspapers during the past week. Following up the stoppage-that-never-happened at the Austin Works, they have exploited every hitch and temporary failure of supplies. Even the newspapers well-disposed to the Government have not been very helpful with the impression they have created of fuel rescue parties dashing desperately to the relief of coal-starved factories. And the public have been treated to apocryphal "emergency Cabinet Meetings" with Mr. Shinwell on the mat, and to tales of excessive absenteeism among the miners, during Christmas week, when in fact attendances and output were considerably better than past years. Actual production was 2,257,000 tons, as compared with 1,701,000 tons a year ago. The technical experts' estimate of probable output was bettered by 350,000 tons. There has, of course, been no new coal crisis. The current difficulties were foreseen, and the Minister of Fuel warned industry on October 9th that these difficulties would arise unless factories would husband their stocks and try to achieve a 10 per cent. saving in fuel. In the interval, coal-production gratifyingly increased, and the miners fulfilled their share of the bargain; but consumption also increased, partly due to improvidence on the part of users, partly due to increased industrial productivity, and partly to the fact that we did not have 2,000,000 unemployed going without fires this Christmas. The Minister, in consultation with the F.B.I., the T.U.C. and the National Production Advisory Council, drew up definite plans weeks ago for restrictions on industrial consumption of fuel during the first three months of 1947. It ill becomes Sir Clive Baillieu who, as president of the F.B.I., was party to those plans, to blame, with more politics than candour, the Minister for shortcomings. Like the foolish virgins, industrialists had been fairly warned.

Special Juries

The "property qualification" for jury service may have been indispensable when property was synonymous with literacy; but, if we redistribute wealth, we must do the same with responsibility and citizenship. Accordingly, whether the Laski case had happened or not, the question of the qualifications of "special" jurors was bound to receive Government attention as soon as juries made their post-war reappearance. In a jury action you get a common jury unless you ask for a "special" one and pay for it. The former (which includes all criminal juries) is drawn from electors between 21 and 60 who have £10 a year in real estate or £20 leasehold, or who as householders are assessed at not less than £30 in London or £20 elsewhere—or have at least 15 windows in their houses! A special juror, on the other hand, must be legally entitled to be called "esquire" (youngest sons of peers and their oldest sons, oldest sons of knights and their oldest sons, chiefs of ancient families "by prescription," and esquires who attend the Knight of the Bath on his installation), or be a person of "higher degree" than esquire, or a banker or merchant, or the occupier of a dwelling-house assessed at £100 or a farm at £300. A careful prescription for respectability. "What's wrong with the present system?" asked Sir Peter Macdonald in the House of Commons. "People are chosen because they are people of substance." "That," said the Solicitor-General, "is the very thing that is said to be wrong with it." We should have said "is wrong."

Honours List

Mr. Winant, best friend of Britain when Britain most needed friends, has received the one satisfactory and worthy form of recognition. The Honours List as a whole is modest, and emphasises services outside the political field. Among the new Peers the names of Sir Ernest Simon, Sir John Maffey, Sir Walter Layton, Charles Dukes and G. M. Garro-Jones stand out; and, amongst the Knights, the selection of Ralph Richardson will please everybody. We note with especial appreciation among the lesser honours the names of Miss Ninette de Valois, L. F. Easterbrook (agricultural expert, whose writing is familiar to readers of the *News Chronicle* and this journal), Miss Kathleen Courtney, Miss F. M. Hancock and Mr. Gordon Russell. The British Empire Medal goes to a hundred men and women distinguished for good work in less publicised spheres. The decision to end the practice of selecting for British honours Indian leaders, who are thereafter regarded as British stooges, has been very properly dropped, after discussion between the Viceroy and the present leaders of India. Congress has been attacking this practice of conferring British honours on Indians for the last twenty-five years, and the Muslim League has recently taken the same stand.

War or Peace in Indo-China?

Fighting continues in the Viet-Nam, and the French, with modern arms and planes at their disposal, seem to have control of the triangle formed by Hanoi, Haiphong and Phu-Lang-Thuong. More French troops are on the way, including a Parachute Regiment. Although M. Blum continues to speak in terms one would expect from a Socialist Prime Minister, the military people on the spot continue their policy of reconquest. Republican resistance shows signs of co-ordination, and the Viet-Nam forces have begun to strengthen their positions round Hue and Tourane and have bombarded Hanoi. General Leclerc, Admiral d'Argenlieu and M. Moutet are reported to be holding a Conference in Hanoi, after which an appreciation of the situation will be sent to M. Blum. Efforts are being made to split the Viet-Nam politically by introducing a bogus "Government" now in process of formation in Nanking. If the French wish to make terms with the Viet-Nam, there is little doubt that President Ho Chi-Minh will choose negotiations rather than a prolonged war. Such terms would probably include the replacement of Admiral d'Argenlieu, cessation of hostilities and the establishment of a joint Franco-Viet-Nam Commission to implement the *modus vivendi* agreement signed in August.

TWO YEARS' GRACE

To be happy, it has been said, an Englishman must learn to take short views and not allow the pleasures of a fine morning to be spoilt by the thought that in these islands the further outlook is nearly always "unsettled." There are occasions, however, when this axiom cannot be followed with prudence; and though the British people are not pessimists by instinct, there is undeniably a general disposition at the beginning of this New Year to look, not to the relatively fair weather forecast for 1947, but farther ahead. What, it is asked, is going to happen in 1949, when the dollar loan will have been used up; when we shall, in all probability, not have completed the requisite modernisation of our obsolete industrial plant; when there will no longer be a sellers' market for our exports; and when the United States (most forecasters agree) will be in the throes of another 1929-pattern slump, with inevitably severe repercussions on all countries linked to America's gigantic and unstable economy? Beneath the optimism congenial to this season there is a widespread fear that, after two years' grace which we are still likely to be vouchsafed, a combination of circumstances may easily arise in which the Labour Government's strength would be impaired and all that it had done in the way of post-war reconstruction imperilled.

Yet in one way Mr. Attlee and his Cabinet colleagues are fortunate. The Crashing Rocks through which they have to steer lie plainly in view. There are two, and only two, causes through which this country and its Government could suffer shipwreck. One would be the continuance of shortages of housing, fuel, food and clothing beyond the point which reasonable people deemed excusable. The other would be large-scale unemployment, for whose emergence blame could fairly be laid at the Government's door. It follows, therefore, that between now and 1949, when the ending of financial help from our transatlantic creditor is likely to coincide with an economic crisis in the United States, and when the life of the present Parliament will be drawing to its close, the Government's chief task is to concentrate on two problems: how is national productivity to be raised, and how is stability in employment to be ensured?

In a few weeks' time we are promised a White Paper in which will be assembled the material necessary for a national stocktaking. We shall know then more exactly how we stand in terms of present production and prospective resources. But, details apart, it is already pretty evident that the picture which this economic budget will present is bound to be patchy. Since VE-Day, recovery of production in the aggregate has been remarkable, but it is to some extent ill-balanced. Soaring ouput, for example, in the metal-using industries marches side by side with lagging production in textiles; and this phenomenon is reflected in a similar maldistribution of labour. Reconversion, in the sense of avoiding frictional unemployment, has gone smoothly; but the impression one derives from our progress, so far, towards a planned economy is that too much of the planning has been done in compartments, and that what is needed is an overall plan for the most effective utilisation of our total resources of man-power and materials. And to this must be added a real stepping up in the rate of industrial re-equipment. Appeals to workers to toil harder with antiquated plant are likely to go unheeded.

But two factors in this problem of increasing production stand out above the rest. If we are to be able by 1949 to produce enough goods both to exchange for necessary imports and to fill the shops; if we are at the same time to get the new houses and new schools which the country rightly demands; and if (since we shall need more home-produced food) we are to succeed in finding sufficient labour for the land when the German prisoners depart—then many more men and women must be set free from the Services and from the making of munitions and turned to productive civilian work. To attempt to carry through the next two years the present burden of Service "unemployment" is to court disaster in 1949. But it is not enough simply to increase the labour force productively employed; there will have to be more efficacious incentives towards greater effort.

The problem of incentives will have to be approached on various lines. Something can perhaps be done by further revision of P.A.Y.E. In some industries, such as textiles, coal mining and agriculture, the average level of earnings will, beyond doubt, have to be scaled radically upwards. The Forty-Hour Week should be held out as a reward to be won by increased production. But, in addition, ways must be found to satisfy labour that the extra effort demanded will be expended for the good of the community and not for the enrichment of private interests. Even nationalisation by itself cannot be relied on to produce the required psychological effect. The granting of the Miners' Charter is an essential complement to the establishment of the National Coal Board. Not only so; before workers can be persuaded to give their best to "their" industry, it will be necessary to develop to a much greater extent the machinery of pit and factory councils whereby democratically elected representatives of the workers are drawn progressively into a share in managerial functions. In short, if we are to succeed in filling the shops as well as the ships by 1949, we shall not merely have to relieve ourselves of at least half the present burden of armaments; we shall also have to move much more impressively along the road towards economic democracy.

Given favourable external conditions, there is no reason why, two years from now, Britain should not be a relatively prosperous country, with her people on a fair way to being decently rehoused. The problem of our foreign indebtedness is admittedly serious; apart from the ultimate necessity of repaying the dollars which we have borrowed from the United States, we have still to negotiate a settlement of the £3,500 millions which we owe to India, Egypt, the Dominions and our other sterling creditors. The fact that we must set aside a substantial proportion of our future production for the satisfaction of these obligations renders it the more imperative that we should not waste man-power on grandiose military commitments, and that we should not tolerate on the part of private enterprise any repetition of past policies of profitable restriction of output. Our task, however, is not insoluble: in the present world shortage of consumers' goods and in the possibility of developing the effective demand of backward countries, we have large, almost limitless, opportunities.

The one great danger is that if, as is possible, the United States runs into a business slump in 1949, through the inability of its unplanned capitalist economy to absorb the output of its war-inflated productive resources, the same conditions may arise as those which filled the streets of our industrial cities with unemployed sixteen years ago. The recurring pattern is tragically familiar. American goods, unsaleable at home, are dumped in markets abroad; co-incidentally, American purchasing power is sharply curtailed by unemployment; and overseas countries, normally good customers of ours, are dragged down in the American depression. Against a recurrence of that catastrophe we must at all costs defend ourselves; and the defensive measures must clearly take the form of a concerted effort to develop trading relations—whether or not they take the form of long-term contracts for specific exchanges—with countries whose economies are likely to show stability in the face of an American slump. First and foremost, obviously, come the Dominions, India and the Colonies; then the U.S.S.R., and (as it recovers) the European market in general. The present tendency of the British Government to favour stimulation of exports to the United States in order to secure dollars, even at the cost of neglecting sales to Europe and the Empire, is, we believe, a profound mistake. Our policy should be to lean as lightly as possible on the American market; to husband our limited and dwindling stock of dollars for purchases from the U.S.A. of essential machinery; and to make every effort to integrate our trade and production with those of countries whose Governments, like our own, are pledged to full employment and socially planned economies.

SILVER IMPERIALISM

The London Conference was postponed in order that the Zionist Congress at Basle could elect a new Jewish Agency Executive with a clear mandate to negotiate with the British Government. The contrary has happened. The Congress has peremptorily refused the Agency permission to take part in the Conference "under present circumstances," and has elected a new Executive in which the influence both of the Palestinians and of Labour is markedly reduced. It has left to the newly-elected General Council —a coalition of incompatibles—the task of deciding whether circumstances have changed sufficiently to justify negotiations. Finally, as a mark of ingratitude to the one great Jewish statesman, it has refused to give Dr. Weizmann the free hand which he demanded as a condition of re-election as President. It did not have the effrontery to put one of his transatlantic assailants in his place, but preferred to remain leaderless in the coming year of decision.

It is vital to understand the reason for this lamentable state of affairs. The Zionists met at Basel for the first time for seven years. During that time a violent shift in the balance of forces within World Jewry has taken place. The East European Jews, the stronghold of Zionism for fifty years, have been virtually liquidated American Jewry, ten years ago a trivial force in Zionist politics, has become a major and self-assertive power, with a financial stranglehold in the movement. American Jews in 1946 contributed some £25,000,000,000 for European relief and for the development of the National Home, about two-thirds of the total budget.

But the growth of American Zionism was counterbalanced by the growing cohesion and national self-consciousness of the Palestinian Jews. In the period when no Congress was possible, the Palestinian leaders dominated the Jewish Agency and largely dictated Zionist policy. Dr. Weizmann, Ben Gurion, Shertok and Mrs. Meyersohn may differ among themselves, but they have worked together for years as the Shadow Cabinet of a Jewish nation struggling for its existence. At Basel they stood solidly together as advocates of Partition, opponents of terrorism, and supporters of an immediate entry to the London Conference. For this policy they had a mandate from the Jews of Palestine and support from British and Dominion Zionists.

It might have been supposed that Palestinian Jewry would be permitted to have the last word in the discussion of its own future. The aim of Zionism has always been to create, not an overseas colony, but an independent Jewish nation. But at Basel the Palestinians were continuously assailed by a United States delegation whose outlook, tactics and policy were far more American than Jewish. The leader of the Americans was Rabbi Silver, an ambitious politician whose primary aim was to oust Dr. Weizmann from the presidency, to assert American influence and to challenge the whole policy of Anglo-Jewish co-operation on which the National Home is based. Publicly, he attacked the Palestinians for themselves proposing Partition instead of making exorbitant demands which could be whittled down in the course of the negotiations. But his real indictment was that, despite General Barker, they were still pro-British, and willing to work Partition instead of welcoming a conflict with the British Army. Shertok and Ben Gurion, who

were treated by the Cabinet a few months ago as the leaders of anti-British terrorism, have been ousted from their paramount position in the Agency on account of their pro-British activities; and Rabbi Silver, while formally condemning terrorism, has made it perfectly clear that American support will be forthcoming if the Palestinian Jews resist the British.

This situation will be deeply disturbing to many of the 6,000,000 American Jews. Though Hitler's persecutions in Europe and British policy in Palestine have inflamed their passions, only a small proportion are members of the Zionist organisation which Rabbi Silver and his colleagues represent. Many influential Jews who subscribe heavily to the Relief and Palestine funds resent bitterly Rabbi Silver's anti-British agitation. Nor should it be supposed that the American Zionists themselves are against Partition. Despite constant questioning at Congress, Rabbi Silver refused to commit himself on this issue. Before he left New York, he gave an assurance to Mr. Byrnes, who is strongly in favour of Partition and is ready to send an observer to the London Conference, that the American Zionists would do nothing to prevent Jewish participation. But he is fighting for the principle that the Jew who pays the shekel calls the tune. For him and for his colleagues—most of whom are completely ignorant of the Middle East, but expert in the arts of American politics—the Palestinian Jews are not a nation but colonists who must obey the instructions of World Jewry, which means, in effect, the American Zionists. At Basel he played the role of a Jewish George III, who was not going to tolerate any Boston tea-parties in Tel-Aviv.

If Mr. Bevin is wise, he will pay little attention to the rumpus at Basel. What matters are the homeless Jews of Eastern Europe and the Jewish nation of Palestine. Weizmann, Ben Gurion and Shertok are responsible men and still retain their authority. As the Ministers of a Jewish State in part of Palestine, they could still suppress terrorism. They desire to be a colonial dependency of neither New York nor London; and if they dislike British Imperialism they dislike Silver Imperialism, too. But to retain their authority, they need proof—and quickly—of the value of the British connection. The terrorists in Palestine, who retaliate by whipping British soldiers, are not crazy. They are deliberately destroying the possibility of conciliation and seeking to precipitate the conflict between the British and the Jews which Rabbi Silver seems so ready to assist, if not with American-Jewish blood, at least with promises of support. Only a speedy decision can maintain the authority of the moderates and the friends of Britain in Palestine and save the National Home from complete ruin. If Mr. Bevin acts boldly, he can safely leave it to Mr. Byrnes to deal with Rabbi Silver.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

A TALK WITH THE MAYOR

WHEN last I visited the Palazzo Vecchio, a couple of years ago and a chasm of time away, that most theatrical of American soldiers, General Hume, was arbiter of the Golden Book and the Silver Trumpets, grand impresario of victorious pageantry, and cynosure of reverent military eyes. Now, on a freezing December night, as I crept cautiously through dark and deserted courtyards, having an appointment with His Worship at seven, it was difficult to locate the central figure at all: carabinieri, shadows sliding under columns soaring into obscurity, waved me vaguely onwards. I climbed a dim stair and by ear located a nervous typist, who said fretfully "not here, not here, along there somewhere." Along there somewhere was a high, dusky, noble room, a single sleepy attendant, the bright slit of an opening door: I was ushered into the presence of Mario Fabiani, first Communist Mayor of Florence.

His Worship the Mayor was alone, seated on a red velvet chair before an immensely long polished table, scanning a mass of papers under a single light. Around him stretched vast, stately darkness. He had clearly forgotten my appointment and did not know who I might be, but he rose with a quick gesture of friendly welcome; and I thought, as the lamplight took his face, that the rich dark frame of vaults and arches and painted walls was well enough suited to these youthful, haggard features, the wide, clear eyes and sensitive mouth. One felt instantly that he was alert, warm-hearted, easy to be with. Such had not been my feelings about General Hume.

Fabiani's history is interesting. Son of a small trader, he worked in his father's business until the age of seventeen, when he was "drawn" into clandestine Communist activity. That was in 1928, which makes him 35 to-day. After three years of it, the Fascists were too hot upon his heels and exile followed, in France, Germany and then inevitably Russia, whence he made secret journeys to Italy as inspector of Communist activities. On one of these he was caught, condemned to 22 years of prison, and thus, from 1934 to 1943, spent his time in the cells of Castelfranco, Civitavecchia, and San Gemignano. "Can there be a prison," I exclaimed, "in that enchanting little town?" He smiled. "One of the worst in all Italy." Freed by the fall of Fascism in 1943, he joined and fought with the partisans of Tuscany until the liberation of Florence in August, 1944. A week later he was married, in the Palazzo Vecchio, to a partisan girl who had fought beside him. "We possessed," he added, "nothing in the world except the clothes we stood up in."

Russia seemed to lie on the vast table between us, and to clear it away I asked him whether he thought that Italy would accept Communism. "I would not say that," he replied, "but I would say that Italy's only hope lies in a Communism of her own making. All countries must accept, in their own way, the changes brought about by Communism: as they have accepted the changes brought about by other revolutions." Did Russia, I asked, really love Italy so much as Quaroni had been telling us? "But there is a real love of Italy in Russia," he insisted, "something —how can I put it—very special." How could that be, I said, when hardly a living Russian had seen Italy? "Ah, but they know it through their literature and through our music. They think of it as the land of the sun." Even so, I asked Fabiani, could Italy hope for help from Russia in those raw materials, coal, grain, loans, so badly needed? He shook his head doubtfully. "Russia has so many other preoccupations—for the moment." And the peace treaty? I queried. "Unjust, terribly hard and unjust: our Anglo-American friends are not looking far ahead. An Italy happily settled could be a meeting-place between East and West, a point of equilibrium in an unbalanced world."

There was the Vatican, I suggested. Suddenly the lamp on the table between us flickered and went out. He said through the darkness: "The Church has only itself to blame for what is happening. Anti-clericalism was dead and is now alive again. We of the Left wished to leave the Church alone, to pursue its activities in its own religious sphere. But the Vatican insisted on stepping down into politics and using the pulpit for propaganda. It has identified itself with reaction and shown itself clearly as the spearhead of foreign imperialism in Italy. The people see it. The Church has identified itself, too, with the past—the recent past." Could Fascism be reborn in Italy, I enquired of the darkness. "No. The danger does not exist. After the other war, things were different. Now—there is both the recollection of the past, and a strong Communist party."

I switched to Florence. What were his immediate preoccupations? "Five thousand families without a roof, and another three thousand refugees from Greece—Italians so long resident there that they cannot speak their mother tongue. That is a problem indeed. There are the schools to be rebuilt. Then there is the reconstruction of the whole blitzed area, the Por Santa Maria and the Lungarno and the bridges." "What about tourists?" I said. "Of course we want tourists: we need them. I want to do everything possible in that direction. Fortunately our hotels are intact and ready. We are going to do all in our power to encourage new developments in the theatre, in music, and in exhibitions." I murmured: "You have quite a lot to do. Florence was kind to me when I was young, and has been kind to many English people. If there is anything I can do to help——"

The light came on again. He leaned across the table. "Do you think," he said, as a child might ask for a sweet, "do you think that there would be any sort of chance, a ghost of a chance, of an English loan to the city of Florence?" The question banged against me unawares. I thought suddenly of the newspaper announcements of the morning, Byrnes offering sympathy and loans, Laurent offering emigration to Canada. Why shouldn't English people, so much and for so long a part of Florence, be generous? I said, lamely, "I don't know, really. The English temper about Italy is odd. Not very forgiving. Yet there must be people . . . could we not offer them something definite?" He looked at me quizzically and said "An English club, perhaps?" Nettled, I retorted, "I wasn't thinking of anything so appalling. A place, perhaps, where young people without funds could come and study or just see: not a British Council: something in Italian hands. I will do what I can."

As I stumbled through the courtyards and was poured by a huge Carabinieri out of a small entrance into the snowswept empty square, where a light gleamed upon the gaunt ruins opposite, it seemed strange and sad to me that England should have no part in the rebuilding of Florence. I must do, I said to myself, what I can about it. I must start a ball rolling. Well, here is the ball.

LIONEL FIELDEN

CARRY ON, CARILLON

(After Tennyson)

Ring out, wild bells, through cosmic fog,
Ring out your ever punctual chime
To all mankind in every clime
Inhabiting the global bog.

Ring in the inexorable date,
Ring out your enigmatic rune,
Ring U.N.R.R.A. out a year too soon,
Ring in the peace a year too late.

Ring in a year of boom and bust
Within the Western Hemisphere,
Ring in to all who wake to hear,
The fainter hope, the lesser trust.

Ring in, above this sceptred isle,
Small mercies raining drop by drop
On farm and factory and shop
And temporary domicile.

Ring in the streamlined State express,
Ring in conscription and control,
And public ownership of coal
With compensation and redress.

Ring out the Old Year pessimist,
Ring profit motives out, ring in
A sterner social discipline,
Ring in the New Year Honours List.

Ring out political mistakes,
Ring in industrial reforms,
Ring out gales, frosts, quakes, floods and storms,
Ring in frost, floods, gales, storms and quakes.

Across the requisitioned park
And War Department moors and fells,
Ring in, ring out, ring in, wild bells,
The seasonable question mark.

SAGITTARIUS

A LONDON DIARY

It was a New Year's Eve party and the discussion turned on good resolutions for 1947. A nameless Cabinet Minister said, very severely, "Well, there is no doubt what Critic's resolution should be. He has done nothing but criticise us for twelve months. Why not stop narking in 1947?" Critic could reply with a crack about touchiness of politicians, who are as vain as prima donnas. But, instead, I ask myself whether I have in fact narked—enough, that is, to justify Herbert Morrison's sarcastic surprise at winning support from the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION for the Transport Bill? Actually this journal has supported the Government's domestic programme pretty consistently ever since the election, but we were highly critical of the loan and Bretton Woods and of the mess in Greece and Palestine. And last summer we argued for a reorientation of foreign policy such as (if the words of statesmen are to be taken at face value) is to some degree taking place. But I don't think the anti-narkers are so much concerned with the actual points of criticism as with what they would call the "NEW STATESMAN attitude." Mr. Morrison, for instance, is a party manager, and he naturally wants Socialist weeklies to hold the line as faithfully and discreetly as the *Daily Herald*. But just as a daily newspaper tends to report things when they go wrong and not when they go right, so a weekly must select the difficult problems for comment and not the easy ones. Praise is balm to harassed politicians who like to feel that their efforts are appreciated and most want praise when their case is weakest. In this they are very like theatre people. The acting profession is constantly at war with the critics. They can never quite realise that the critic's job is to help the general public to discriminate between good and bad plays without making too much allowance for the feelings of the profession. There is a parallel here with politics. The politician's outlook on politics is very different from that of the general public. He lives in a special world of his own, with its own standards and small talk, and he unconsciously expects the Press to be written for him. If it were, it would be unread by his constituents.

* * *

It has been said, I think truly, that the biggest factors in the Socialist electoral victory were the school teachers, adult education and A.B.C.A. But if this is so, it is because they did not do Labour Party propaganda, but stimulated the public to think for itself; to that task of creating an intelligent public opinion this journal has contributed its share precisely because it was an independent and not a party organ. Indeed few readers of this paper would continue to read it if it were the kind of journal that Herbert Morrison would like it to be: and many professional people, who have told me that they became Socialists as a result of forming the habit of reading it twenty years ago, would not have been labour leaders to-day if we had been propagandists for the Labour Party rather than exponents of Socialism. The independent mind by definition is annoying to the practical politician concerned with votes and measures. He regards it as an obstacle to be overcome. But if Labour is to retain its electoral hold it will need not less but more critical minds, able to see through the politician's slogans and to discover the truth behind the news despite the penny press. Most of them won't be "reliable party men," and they will be confoundedly embarrassing because they are more about the substance of the issue than about party solidarity. But any smart party manager will always remember that if he can't satisfy these school teachers and civil servants, W.E.A. students and discussion leaders, sooner or later he is going to come a cropper. Narking and the independent mind are the salt of party politics. Too much spoils the flavour and too little is injurious to health.

Out of the many thousands of Christmas Draws, a few are usually selected for prosecution. By the Betting and Lotteries Act, 1934, we legalised at long last those well-established English customs (charitable bazaar raffles, sweepstakes in the office or club) by which people betted without undue risk, without much trouble to the conscience, and with the vicarious pleasure (having lost) of seeing who had won. The Act permits "private lotteries" confined to "members of one society established and conducted for purposes not connected with lotteries," or to people who all work or live with each other in the same premises. A "Society" can include, for the purposes of the Act, a "club, institution, organisation, or other association of persons by whatever name called." But it seems to have been decided that it ought not to include, for example, the London District Branch of the Communist Party of Great Britain, whose premises in Greek Street were raided by the police a fortnight ago because they were running a "Grand Xmas Draw" in aid of the party funds, with prizes of £100, £50, and £10. I do not know whether this action is a police initiative or a reflection of higher policy; the lottery ticket I have seen appears to comply with the Act, so that the point for decision may be whether allegiance to a political party constitutes membership of a "society." Perhaps the law cannot be stretched so far, in view of the Pauline precept that "we are members one of another." But unless there are sinister features of the Communists' Christmas that are hidden from non-members, it seems a strange choice for the annual burnt offering to the Lotteries Act. There may be safety limits to political tolerance, but it is not the betting laws which set them. The law is always overlooked, at any rate, amidst the ballyhoo of Savings Weeks, when patriotic but illegal public lotteries are organised all over the country and you can actually buy tickets from the police.

* * *

Our correspondence columns this week include a letter from Mr. John C. Sharp, an ex-prisoner of the famous No. 2 Railway Construction Group which worked under the Japanese in Siam. He is a good deal bothered about the sentence of ten years passed on a Japanese officer named Yanagida. An account of this officer can be read in Chapter 6 of John Coast's book, *Jungle Railway*. Though administratively in charge, he was in fact subordinate to the most junior officer of the Japanese Engineers who were responsible for pushing the work through. I talked to another British officer who went through the whole hell of the jungle railway and find that he agrees with Mr. Sharp. His point is that the trials are mainly based on atrocity evidence, collected and used against the Japanese from all British P.O.W.'s, who had to fill in forms giving the names of Japanese who had committed any beastly crimes, and giving details of time and place and what had actually been done to whom. He agrees that Yanagida was personally decent enough, committed no bestialities himself and was not, for instance, responsible for the fact that in *all* camps anyone attempting to escape was shot. These Japanese trials receive very little publicity in this country, and I gather that British P.O.W.'s feel that the big men responsible for policy at the top are being too leniently treated, while too much time is being spent in trying and hanging the lesser brutes. Anyway, they say that it would have been well if, after so many months, some of the ex-P.O.W.'s whose evidence was collected at a time when it was impossible for them to have a balanced view, were to be consulted about the trials.

* * *

The Under-Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr. Oliver, was asked, just before the Christmas recess, to take action to prevent the reappearance of British Fascism. He did not think it necessary—which may or may not be true—and certainly any such action needs very careful consideration on grounds of expediency. But when Mr. Oliver says: "We must not forget that this is a democracy, and criticism of political institutions . . . is the basis of democracy," he utters a truism which in its context suggests that he has no very deep knowledge of democratic history. Democracy works as long as there is a basic understanding that the minority yields until it becomes a majority, while the majority in power does not suppress the minority. There has never been anything in democratic theory making it obligatory to tolerate those who, when in office themselves, would destroy the liberty that enables them to win power. In the seventeenth century, the two great precursors of toleration and constitutional democracy, Milton and Locke, both excluded Roman Catholicism from the range of tolerance, because in days when Britain was threatened by the Catholic tyrannies of France and Spain, Catholics were a fifth column whose victory would mean Catholic totalitarianism here. If democrats tolerate the growth of an organisation pledged to destroy them, the only deduction is that they haven't any belief in themselves. How and when they should act against the Fascist, of course belongs to the art and not to the theory of politics. But let anyone who is doubtful about the principle, just ask himself whether it would not have been a good thing for the German Social Democrats to have scotched Hitler when he first began to organise in the early '20's!

* * *

Those who were casting Strachey as the misanthropic Scrooge forgot that Ebenezer eventually turned up with the turkey. And so, as far as one can judge from a pretty wide canvass of my friends (including those who could not afford turkeys before the war) the turkey share-out has been pretty good. The general opinion is that Christmas festivities have been fairly well endowed with pleasant things. Toys for the children were good, if a bit expensive and not over-abundant, and the stocking fill-ups—the kind of trivials that children love to break on Christmas day—were back in the cheap stores. So were the decorations. The extra sweet ration was a godsend to the youngsters. And there were tangerines and oranges and even some table dates, if not the old glacé fruits. There seemed to be a fair amount to drink without going on the black market.

* * *

Allan Laing, prizewinner among prizewinners and indefatigable collector of pleasant oddities, has produced this Christmas a (typed) collection of the poems of Bernard Shaw. They include of course Mendoza's love poem from *Man and Superman*, and similar trifles from the plays But the best come from occasional verses written to Ellen Terry. I like this invitation to Ayot St. Lawrence:

> This scene which would a stone unharden
> Is but the view from Bernard's garden.
> Here, standing sideways to the dawn,
> And looking northwards up the lawn,
> You see the house that Bernard weeps in
> Because his Ellen never peeps in.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to C. James.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

A brilliant speaker wants a first-class cause.—Advt. in *The Times*.

Kissing Gates are to replace a stile across a public footpath at Barnfield, Crediton, Devon, for the sake of stiff-jointed aged people.—*Sunday Pictorial*.

"When faith in the money standard goes, faith in standards of any kind is apt to go, too."—*Sunday Times*.

Grave, best part Brookwood Cemetery, unused, in perfect order . . .—Advt. in *The Times*.

ADVANCE IN EDUCATION

THE Education Act, 1918, made it the duty of local education authorities to set up and maintain day continuation schools for young people between the ages of 14 and 18. By the end of 1921, 95,000 students were in regular attendance at these schools. A year later all compulsory attendance, save at Rugby, had ceased. Why? The lack of suitable teachers and the makeshift nature of many of the buildings were undoubtedly formidable in their effects; but these effects might well have been discounted if it had not been, as the Ministry of Education has frankly confessed, that "public opinion was not wholly convinced that the scheme ought to be carried through."

In an admirable survey* of the major provisions of the Education Act, 1944, Dr. W. P. Alexander concludes with the warning that this country has, in the past, "placed on the statute book provisions for reform in education which have never been carried into effect because as time passed public opinion was not sufficiently pressing to overcome reactionary forces." His purpose is, therefore, to provide a non-technical and simple guide in the hope that parents, recognizing the benefits which the Act will ultimately make available, will keep up a continuous pressure on the Government and local education authorities.

The dictum of Disraeli that "upon the education of this country the fate of this country depends" was appropriately printed, three years ago, on the title page of the Coalition White Paper on *Educational Reconstruction* from which stemmed the Education Act and the present requirements of policy. The purposes of the programme, with which administrators are now struggling, are "to secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life; to ensure a fuller measure of education and opportunity for young people; and to provide means for all of developing the various talents with which they are endowed and so enriching the inheritance of the country whose citizens they are." These purposes constitute a colossal task; and the danger is that, because the Act, in the words of the Minister of Education, will "take a whole generation to bring into force," public opinion will be content with a pace of progress less than all would wish. If the compulsory school age is, as has been promised, to be raised to 15 on April 1, 1947, and if the size of classes is to be reduced without delay and amenities and accommodation improved as quickly as possible, the present teaching force must be increased by more than half, and a vast and costly building programme undertaken. Already there are signs that immediate reforms may be delayed unless public opinion is sufficiently pressing.

Some indication of what the Ministry of Education hopes to achieve in strengthening the teaching force was given last month by the Minister in reply to a Parliamentary question. It is expected, she said, that the number of teachers available in primary and secondary schools will increase from 176,000 in January, 1947, to 190,000 in January, 1948, and to 200,000 in January, 1949.

If this is to be done, it is necessary to ensure that there is, within these three years, a total intake to the profession of 59,000. During the same period it is estimated that there will be, in addition to the normal retirement of 18,000 teachers, an abnormal retirement of 17,000. Even if, as is hoped, 10,000 teachers return to the schools from the Forces and industry before January, 1949, and 27,000 enter the profession from training colleges and university departments, an additional 22,000 will be required under the emergency training scheme.

Here the number of potential students is impressive; but the same can hardly be said of the pace at which the scheme is being expanded. In Circular 106, published in May, the Ministry expressed the hope that, although there was at that time accommodation for less than 3,500 students in emergency training colleges, there would be a total admission of 12,600 before the end of this month. This target has not been reached. Several hundred students have completed their training; approximately 6,500 are now studying in these colleges; but 22,000 men and 3,000 women, who have been selected for training, are still patiently awaiting admission.

The slow pace of expansion does not, however, spell an immediate breakdown in the plans of the Ministry. The return of 10,000 teachers from the Forces and industry, and an entry of 27,000 into the profession from training colleges and university departments in the three years ending January, 1949, will be more than sufficient to replace both normal and abnormal retirements during the same period. As the total number of additional teachers who will be required as a result of the raising of the compulsory school age to 15 on April 1 is no more than 13,000, this need can be met without increasing further in the next two years the present accommodation in emergency training colleges. Merely to increase the total teaching force to 189,000 would, therefore, prevent the postponement of the raising of the compulsory school age, but it would preclude the possibility of a start being made in reducing the size of classes.

How speedily this can be done must depend largely both on the expansion and on the continuance of the emergency training scheme. The latest returns from local education authorities show there is, at present, a ratio of one teacher to 29 children. If classes in both primary and secondary schools are to be reduced to a maximum of 30, this ratio must become one teacher to 20 children; and such a ratio is, it has been estimated, impossible without a total teaching force of 300,000. Since it can neither be assumed that the annual entry to the profession from training colleges and university departments will, within the next few years, exceed the present target (which has not yet been reached) of 9,000, nor that retirements will be fewer than 7,000 a year, it would seem that this necessary reform can only be achieved within twelve years if the output from the emergency training colleges averages not less than 8,000 for each of these years. To assume that such an average will suffice is to take no account of the possibility of the compulsory school age being raised to 16 during this period, nor of the staffing needs of county colleges which local education authorities are required to establish by April 1, 1950.

The problem of accommodation is, unfortunately, no less decisive in determining the pace of the advance; and it is not likely to be solved more easily. At the end of 1945 the Ministry of Education made it clear that the amount of new building required for the limited purpose of raising the compulsory school age to 15 on April 1 could only be executed if it were accepted that the necessary building must take "the form of prefabricated huts which can be quickly erected and with the minimum expenditure of skilled labour." To expedite the provision of this accommodation it was arranged that the Ministry of Works should, on behalf of local education authorities, undertake the responsibility of supplying and erecting sufficient huts to provide 6,000 classrooms and practical rooms.

More recently the Committee on Sites and Building Procedure stated that, if building needs were to be met within a reasonable time, there must be an annual average capital expenditure of £70,000,000 over a period of years. The large demand for building labour and the shortage of many building materials make it impracticable to achieve immediately this target. The Ministry is, however, planning building work to the value of £24,000,000 during 1947, priority being given to the provision of schools of light permanent construction to meet new housing developments and to provide accommodation for the raising of the compulsory school age.

Urgent as the need is for huts and for schools of light permanent construction, their erection hardly begins to meet the demand for better accommodation and amenities. Only when the present restrictions on building can be drastically modified will it be possible to reorganise the existing 9,662 all-age schools into separate primary and secondary departments, and to reconstruct those schools (three-fourths of the total number) which fail to comply with the minimum building standards prescribed by the Ministry.

J. MACKAY-MURE

* The Education Act: A Parents' Guide. *Phœnix House*, 2s.

PERMANENT MOORINGS

LIKE thousands of others, Mrs. Hunt, of Harrow, Middlesex, has been looking for a house to live in. But when I met her, unlike most other people, she had actually solved her problem, in a way which is a typical solution of our time.

Mrs. Hunt is twenty-eight. Her recent history reads like a circular issued by a Government department—a short spell in the Land Army at the beginning of the war; three years' service in the W.A.A.F.; married just over a year ago; demobilised six months and haunted by the great housing problem ever since. The Hunts never aimed high. She does part-time secretarial work for £3 a week, her husband earns £5 as an assistant to a bookseller in the City. Perhaps, a long way back while in the Services, Mrs. Hunt had been dreaming about The House of To-morrow with radiant heat, electronic devices, daylighting, removable and adjustable partitions and magic kitchens. . . . But on £8 you cannot afford these things.

Mrs. Hunt knew that, and she was not worried. All she was concerned with was a bit of privacy, and she was lucky to find it in a furnished flat. If the landlady had not suddenly decided to sell the house, Mr. and Mrs. Hunt would probably still be in that flat, waiting for the housing shortage to ease. But the landlady had already sold the house. And so the Hunts started looking for a new flat. They could not find one, and started looking for a bungalow. They saw quite a few, but the prices of all of them were about £3,000, which they could not afford. So they started looking for a furnished room. Meanwhile they were living in one room in the three-roomed flat belonging to Mrs. Hunt's uncle.

It was about that time that the solution presented itself. It came in the form of a notice in a newspaper, offering for sale assault landing crafts which had been converted into house-boats. Mrs. Hunt wrote asking "for particulars." She was one of 80,000 people who wrote. Some letters came from as far as Burma and Cairo. Officers about to be demobilised, couples recently married, families living in overcrowded rooms—to all of them the little advertisement seemed to provide the answer.

A house-boat is, of course, not exactly a new idea. It is an ideal way of spending one's week-end or holiday. There are house-boats in Kashmir. Nearer home the purpose of a caravan is akin to that of a house-boat. But in the past the people who lived *permanently* in a house-boat or a caravan could roughly be divided into bohemians and tramps. When the King and Queen paid their Royal Visit to Paris in the summer of 1938 all house-boats moored along the Seine were ordered to move up the river and out of sight. Evidently both, bohemians and tramps, were undesirables. But of the 80,000 who answered the advertisements, nearly all would have been offended by being placed in either of these categories. The letters showed that they considered themselves very normal beings with a very normal problem to solve.

The shipbuilders, too, had "normal" people in mind when they first approached the Admiralty and bought for £60 each the tattered and weather-beaten hulls of the disused landing crafts. One of the shipbuilders, a young man of about 35, knew the problem from personal experience. He had been in the Navy for six years. When he was demobilised he had to live in one place, his wife

and child in another. "I was lucky," he told me; "I had some money and could buy a house. But not many can." And so, out of his experience of the sea, his professional skill and his knowledge of the needs of the moment, the first designs for a house-boat, with a view to permanent living aboard in summer and winter, were born. The shipbuilders gave special consideration to keeping the whole boat dry and well ventilated at the same time; they built a superstructure of steel and timber, with plenty of air currents in between, and they guaranteed a span of life equal to that of a house provided the boat "is very well looked after."

There are three compartments, all with built-in furniture. The "saloon" is equipped with a sideboard and a settee with padded seats. There is enough room for two persons to turn round twice or to entertain two visitors. A Courtier-type stove is built into the wall dividing the saloon from the bedroom, which is fitted with a 6ft. by 4ft. double berth, with bedside shelf and airing cupboard and locker accommodation. There is a hip-bath (or a shower, if you like to have that instead), a w.c. and a Calor-gas geyser providing hot water for washing. Calor-gas is also used for cooking, and a modern designed sink, cupboard for food, a refrigerator, a ventilated meat and provision safe, power plugs and electric light batteries are all included. The whole costs about £1,300, including the motor, which, however, is optional. It costs £175, and some buyers have left it out for reasons of economy.

When Mrs. Hunt went down to Twickenham to inspect the boat, she considered she had found a home at last. The shipbuilder told me that she was like nine out of every ten women who had come to look at the boat. To nearly all of them it made an immediate appeal. The fact that the tank had to be filled with water once every ten days or a fortnight, that the gas-cylinders had to be replaced regularly, the batteries for the lights re-charged, the paint renewed frequently—all this was unimportant. It was a home, and that it was a floating home did not alter the fact. And there, a short way down the river, where Mrs. Hunt was taken on the boat, one of the houses was already "in operation." Nappies were swaying gently from the windows. The boat lay quietly, surrounded by the warmish blue November mist rising from the water. The river looked still and no traffic was about. The boat, indeed, appeared almost like a house built on the very edge of a green and deserted lawn.

Mr. Hunt, like all men, was a bit more doubtful. But what appealed to him was the engine fitted to the boat and the idea of not necessarily being tied to one place. You could simply slip your moorings and move away. There was no packing to be done, no luggage to be carried, no tickets to be booked for the journey. One could get away from it all, in no time, so to speak. Of course, that is a fallacy. Like a snail, one carries one's house and one cannot cut off oneself so easily. Probably, at bottom, Mr. Hunt, too, was looking for roots, even though, on the surface, the idea of mobility and expanse intrigued him. In any case, between the conflicting desires the decision was made. The housing society would not, of course, advance the money for a *boat*—not even a house-boat; they had never had a similar request yet. But Mr. Hunt's father stepped forward and advanced the necessary cash.

I went to see the Hunts in her uncle's flat. The bedroom suite they had bought in anticipation of their own flat stood against the wall in the entrance hall, almost blocking the way. The room in which they lived was cluttered up with their belongings. Books and clothes were piled up in the corners. "So you think you have solved the problem," I said to them. "I was tired of that futile search from room to room," Mr. Hunt answered with impatience, sitting in a deep, worn leather armchair. The problem was solved—or almost.

Now for the Hunts it was only a question of finding moorings. That, too, is a problem, though only a minor one. Moorings are not easy to get, and rates appear not to be fixed. In fact, now that people are hunting for moorings, rates seem to be going up. In some parts of the Thames the Hunts were asked for as much as £1 a week. As Mr. Hunt works in the City, the matter of moorings is important. But the Hunts have until Easter to find a suitable place, for the shipbuilders can only turn out one boat a week although they work all day till late, and week-ends, too. The yard teems with activity. Hip-baths are piled up in a shed, the carpenters have their hands full, the painters are trying out new colour combinations, and there are boats in all stages of construction, from hull to the finished house.

The idea of the converted landing craft evidently has caught on—at least for the time being. Some ten boats have already been converted and delivered to their owners; another twenty to thirty have been sold; and the shipbuilder showed me the newly-opened file with some 1,000 names of "interested parties." So far, these shipbuilders have bought 120 landing craft. The Admiralty have about a 1,000 altogether to dispose of.

"Why don't you buy up more hulls in view of the demand?" I asked the shipbuilder. "Others might snatch them up before you." He was cautious. "We shall first have to see how our lot is doing," he said. "We don't know yet what conditions will be like when we have finished converting the 120." The shipbuilder was clearly a practical man. "In other words," I ventured, "you are a bit doubtful about the permanency of the house-boat idea?" He gave a slightly embarrassed smile. "I can't say I believe the house-boat will stand up to an ordinary house when houses are available again," he admitted.

And so we left the bridge aft, clambered over a number of hulls moored along the "prototype," and regained land. It is, after all, a natural desire to want to get back on to dry land—just as natural as to see a more secure attraction in a rooted house. The house which Mrs. Hunt saw on the river was not built on the edge of the lawn and reflected in the water after all. It was a boat, floating on the river. As such, of course, it will remain; and it will not even necessarily lose in value—provided it has kept its motor and has been well looked after. But it will have reverted to its more normal function, giving pleasure on week-ends and holidays, even though Mr. and Mrs. Hunt firmly believe to-day that it provides them with permanent moorings.

STEPHEN SIMMONS

PEOPLE : Parisians

NORTHOLT: a certain abruptness, along with efficiency, even hustle. Le Bourget: the immediate politeness followed by muddle at every stage, with plenty of officials busily uncoordinated. Eventually my host got me away to lunch, handsomely remarking: "Everything you are about to eat is illegal."

I had not been in Paris since 1938. Until then I went often, to escape into the pleasures of being bourgeois. Now I found these pleasures sadly dimmed. Listless confusion spread everywhere, monumental in garages and shops, but reaching down even to the cloakroom attendant in a reasonable restaurant. It required no Mass-observation to notice a painfully obvious over-individualism among the better-off, who hover on the edge of panic, facing their parallel monsters of inflation and Communism. The accumulation of safe currency or commodities has become an obsession. The pound is publicly quoted in the Press at "Prix Pratiques" of over 1,000 francs—more than double the legal rate.

The simplest affair becomes corrupt; a straightforward interchange between two people seems unreal. Innumerable middlemen—often students supplementing their now deflated scholarships—elaborate each deal. I met one businessman who found a new office, rent 40,000 francs. He paid a million and a half in bribes before he got near the place. A wholesaler typically assured me: "It is absolutely impossible to run a business to-day unless you work black." Another friend, an eminent doctor, is so disgusted that he has sold his long-established clinic and is getting out. I had the use of a car for a week and was ironically congratulated because it was not once stolen.

Current jokes—always a good index—are largely black. . . . A lunatic recovers after twenty years. He is delighted, on visiting his once favourite restaurant, to eat exactly a 1927 meal. But the bill comes to 2,000 francs. He only has 20, the past price. The proprietor says he will call the police. The customer insists: "Sorry, but this is all I have!" He puts down 20 francs—in gold. The proprietor embraces him, gives him 2,000 change, bows him out. The ex-lunatic deciding everybody else can't be mad, sadly returns to his asylum. Or the man trying to decide if he should register his son's birth four years late or early. He elaborately considers the balance of advantages and disadvantages when the boy's call-up will become due. Eventually a friend, distressed by his anxiety, suggests he might register the boy's real age. Says father: "Oh, I never *thought* of that."

We think we are tired here. In bourgeois Paris, many seem too tired to clap or laugh, even in Grand Guignol or Père Ubu. Outside the bourgeosie signs are healthiest. Despite hard conditions, some industries have done man-hour marvels, especially where the Communists have strong influence. Working-class discipline increases. The better-off, when they most need self-discipline and self-control, abandon themselves to the immediate. This is not to say that many workers are not corrupt, just as some bourgeois are pure. A regular Sunday sight: Paris workers cycling into the country for butter to sell black in the city.

* * * * * *

Within this broad pattern of bourgeois decay there is an important sex difference. Utter defeat in arms "showed up" French manhood from the female point of view. During the two occupations which followed, the women saw other and apparently more "virile" men. Meanwhile Frenchmen did not put up such an impressive show in resistance as some have claimed. My favourite French picture is the little man surrounded by batteries of photographers and reporters; caption: "The fellow who *says* he wasn't a leader of the resistance." Even in the country, as Christopher Sykes points out:

> The core of strength in this French life which refused to accept defeat came chiefly from the women—from those powerful middle-aged women of France.

Once more the men are failing—to control the conditions of peace. They have not even had the energy to preserve their one legalised privilege of immorality in the face of many new and more anti-social ones; for, under female influence, all brothels have been closed—a revolution in a land where most bourgeois men used them.

Women are the last bourgeois dynamic, disorganised but linked to Catholicism, the only French discipline alternative to Communism. (Self-discipline is gone.) Women give "the soldier who wasn't defeated" a persistent position despite his stupidities; through the female vote, he easily led in the latest opinion poll for next President. French mass-astrologers disagree over De Gaulle's 1947. Some kill him off, others make him President. Increasingly, the public expect an extreme. The leading Herriot liberal daily, discussing a C.G.T. demand, says characteristically: "There is no such thing as a minimum standard of living in a country that is dying."

* * * * * *

Such attitudes are not new nor necessarily lasting, but so widely spread that they are enough to decide France's future. My friends look, speak, think much as they did eight years ago. In individual relationships they remain intelligent, understanding, generous, responsible. In wider relationships selfishness and opportunism reign supreme. As one put it, in the extreme mood: "To-day 2 per cent. have ideals—1 per cent. of the top lot, the wonderful ones; 1 per cent. at the

bottom, true ideologists. No one else is moral."

It was good luck to land back at Northolt and accept a friendly lift to town. The driver had served through the '14 war, joined again in '39 to tow air targets, with 1s. a day danger money—"If you wind in too fast and the rope loops, it'll cut you in half. One of our chaps was cut in three pieces." Such solid British grumbling and blunt helpfulness distinguish men still enjoying the self-discipline borne of self-respect. The French bourgeoisie stand gesticulating on the edge of their abyss, arguing its depths; we sit on the edge of ours, singing, with hands interlocked, "Auld Lang Syne."

TOM HARRISSON

W. C. FIELDS

So now there is another cold gap, for W. C. Fields is dead. I wrote the rough treatment of a film for him once—and kept my family all winter in Arizona on the proceeds (those were the days)—but the film was never made, chiefly, I think, because even then Fields could no longer sustain a leading rôle. It was a story about an itinerant piano tuner wandering round the ranches in the South-West, and had, I think, some good Fieldsian situations in it. In one of them Fields, in despair and after some desperate bragging, decides to get tough and hold up a car, but the car he chooses is full of old Western sharp-shooters on their way to a rodeo and delighted to find a little target practice on the way. If you remember Fields, you can imagine him in that situation.

I saw him long before he found his way to Hollywood, before 1914, when he was touring the halls here with his juggling and trick billiard table act. He was very funny even then, and I seem to remember him balancing a number of cigar boxes and staring with horror at a peculiar box, in the middle of the pile, that wobbled strangely, as if some evil influence were at work. All his confidence, which you guessed from the first to be a desperate bluff, vanished at the sight of this one diabolical box, which began to threaten him with the nightmare of hostile and rebellious things. And this, I fancy, was the secret of his huge and enchanting drollery—though, oddly enough, it seems to have been missed—that he moved, warily in spite of a hastily assumed air of nonchalant confidence, through a world in which even the inanimate objects were hostile, rebellious, menacing, never to be trusted. He had to be able to *juggle* with things, to be infinitely more dexterous than you and I need be, to find it possible to handle them at all. They were not, you see, his things, these commonplace objects of ours. He did not belong to this world, but had arrived from some other and easier planet.

All the truly great clowns—and Fields was undoubtedly one of them—have the same transient look. They are not men of this world being funny. They are serious personages—perhaps musicians like Grock, ambassadors with attendants like the Fratellini, or hopeful inventor-promoters like Fields—who have, through some blunder on the part of a celestial Thomas Cook, landed from the other side of Arcturus on the wrong planet. They make the best of a bad business, but what is easy for us—merely picking up a bag of golf clubs or moving a chair—is horribly difficult for them. Things that give us no trouble offer them obstacles and traps, for nothing here is on their side.

Nobody could suggest the malice of objects better than Fields. At his best moments, an ordinary room, empty of other human beings, could turn itself into a mined mountain pass. He could start a bitter feud with two chairs and a sideboard. When he arrived in places like golf courses or billiards rooms he would be plunged into an Arabian Night of sorcery. Once in a delirious short film he appeared as a dentist, surrounded by gadgets and visited by curious patients, and then there was nothing for it but to go berserk; and as you stared at him you could feel your temperature rising. He wandered through Hollywood films like a hoarse Ally Sloper in Wonderland. Even when he did not care any more, and was only anxious to sail away on a sea of double Martinis and straight Bourbon, and ambled through any kind of supporting part, usually as a broken-down showman, he was still a character in another dimension, still faintly illuminated by the wonder and nonchalant glory of the great clown. In about the last scene I remember him in, he was denounced by the outraged host at a party as "an incorrigible prevaricator" or something of that sort. "Is that good or bad?" the Fields character demanded, poised between friendship and fury.

Like so many Americans whom we think of with gratitude and affection, he showed what he thought of the American way of life by drinking and thumb-nosing himself clean out of it. Always a ripe character off the stage, he became fruitier and more fantastic in his later years, turning his whole existence into one huge comic character part. He began as a waif and ended as one. The vast pretensions of Hollywood withered away at his glazed look and contemptuous mutter. (Among his entourage he had a man with a tiny head. And with a head like that, Fields announced, "he'll own Hollywood.") He was frequently cast as the boaster whose bluff was called, the inventor who achieved nothing useful, the intriguer who missed success; but one always had an odd feeling, perhaps because one knew that this was not really his world at all, that his failure was better than the other people's triumph. And though he was no Micawber in voice, appearance, manners, somehow he contrived to suggest the indomitable romanticism of Micawber, the spirit that transformed the lower depths of corn and coal agencies into the shining stuff of an epic. He was Micawber's American grandson who had got into show business and had been kicked around.

Fields was a professional droll who defied all conventions and soaked himself in hard liquor. No doubt he had had his day. But his departure, perhaps for his real home where the furniture is quiet and kind and all things behave properly, is a sad loss to America, which could better spare whole rows of hard-faced rich men, glad-handing politicians, obedient editors and raucous commentators, than it could this one rebellious clown. For it is here, among these bitter or uproarious drolls, slapping the custard pie on the faces of solemn prominent citizens, refusing to sign on the dotted line, that American life stays healthy, ripe, still crammed with promise, and not among the brassy patriots and the enquirers into Un-American Activities. Long ago Fields made us laugh by staring in despair at the wobbling cigar-boxes. Now the others stare at the wobbling boxes too. But I doubt if they will make anybody laugh.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

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The Arts and Entertainment

THEATRES

"Antony and Cleopatra," at the Piccadilly.

"Pacific 1860," at Drury Lane.

In the artificial daylight of the Piccadilly tube, the realities of the Piccadilly Theatre began to fade. Was this production of *Antony and Cleopatra* the Shakespearian experience of a lifetime? Or among the five best? Checking back, there is Gielgud's first Hamlet to be remembered; Devlin's Lear; the Marlowe Society's *Troilus*; Edith Evans as Beatrice; and before that of course an earlier production still of *Antony*, at Oxford, with Cathleen Nesbitt and Cecil Ramage, both very young and very handsome, both seeming to live rather than to act the theme of Love, whether on the stage of the O.U.D.S. theatre, or walking arm in arm down Merton Street.

Maybe this is not Miss Evans's greatest part. She has not the serpentine power, which Cathleen Nesbitt could suggest, of seeming to entwine Antony more deeply by her very disentanglements. But Miss Evans alone possesses the essential, the quality of depth. "The sense of criminality in Cleopatra's passion is lessened by our insight into its depths and energy . . . ." Unless these depths can be portrayed Cleopatra is in essence no more than a megalomaniac strumpet. For the speaker of the most noble lines in drama, it is by no means essential that the voice should seem to speak for Egypt; still less should it sound for renaissance England: it must in some way be the voice of the world.

Mr. Tearle's Antony has a different kind of excellence. He looks the part very finely, closely resembling as he does, the description of Antony which Shakespeare studied in North's "Plutarch:"

> . . . a noble presence, and shewed a countenaunce of one of a noble house: he had a goodly thicke beard, a broad forehead, and there appeared such a manly looke in his countenaunce, as is commonly seene in Hercules pictures, stamped or graven in mettell.

With the dignity of a Kemble, Mr. Tearle shows us all the merits of classical Shakespearian acting. His gestures are not newly observed from life, in the modern manner: but reality is suggested as vividly in the exact and graceful execution of the gestures of stage convention.

Nevertheless the chief honours go to production more than performance. If *feliciter audax* describes the play's language, then the same "happy valiance" must be shown in its direction. Vigorous use is made of every possible means of going into and coming out of an ingenious permanent set. Remarkably interesting incidental music, by Anthony Hopkins, and an effective decor by Motley, are welded to the producer's point of view. And the boring inanities of average Shakespeare production are cut out altogether. Goodbye to all that excessive friendliness and shoulder clapping, when comrade meets comrade after an absence of only one interval for a shilling ice and a small gin. Goodbye to the murmur of angry armies hidden in the prompt corner. Goodbye to the dumping of corpses in Act V, to cries of agony after a prod in the ribs with a three-ply sword, to the idiotic dignity of very minor actors made up as very major plenipotentiaries, to the cautious fanfares announcing the approach of desperate monarchs. Mr. Glen Byam Shaw infused interest and excitement into the various death scenes, some of which, notably the death of Eros, and the self-wounding of Antony, were startling, and moving. And the difficult *tutti* scenes, with naturalistic pauses for the triumvirs in conclave were among the best.

The excesses of the feast scene were given point by the presence of a wonderfully lean-and-hungry-looking Caesar, and the sense of the flesh and blood of love was pointed in the same way by the contrasting shadowy presence of eunuch Mardian.

At the Theatre Royal, not all the king's horses (in the shape of a steamboat snorting real steam), nor all

the king's men (in the shape of a chorus of natives industriously uttering barbaric cries) could evoke the atmosphere of the South West Pacific in 1860, or make headway against the huge and foggy corners of Drury Lane 1946. But no-one wants to repay Mr. Coward for the bounty of his gifts, past and to come, by making caustic remarks if, out of the exuberance of his productivity, he drops one of his rare floaters. When the flattest lyric-ese is in full spate ("whate'er the troubled years may bring") he will turn aside and write a scene for the beautiful but abandoned Miss Martin with all his own genuine grace and feeling.

But in general, we are reminded of Yeats's comment (Yeats fidgetting at the back of the circle, while McCormack, for the hundredth time began his Irish Melody: *Beeleeve me eef all . . .*) "Oh, the damnable clarity of the words." Oh, the damnable clarity of the plot and the production and those drill-hall routines which will never vary, by so much as an inch, from one performance to the next. Mr. Coward's high standard of taste, applied to the large scale musical, creates a species of clash. Some of Mrs. Calthrop's costumes, for instance, are individually excellent. The room in Southern Georgian is perfection. But until the curtains are closed, the effect is ruined by a purple glimpse of a musical comedy mountain outside the window. In sum, there is a curious lack of warmth and enjoyment. There should be a new word, counterpart of "amateurish"—"professionalish."

STEPHEN POTTER

"Cinderella" at the Players

The Players' annual pantomime has a better chance this year on a larger stage. Archie Harradine has been ingenious in adapting a mid-Victorian *Cinderella*; you will enjoy it if you like a continuous stream of shocking puns, some nice décor, and agreeable singing. Miss Joyce Cummings makes a most attractive Cinderella with a tuneful voice. Don Gemmel, the producer and the most robust of Ugly Sisters, carries off the comedian honours. The whole show, which ends with the traditional Harlequinade, is played in the right atmosphere of fun and high spirits.

THE MOVIES

"My Darling Clementine," at the Odeon
"Lady in the Lake," at the Empire

Christmas for murder. Sprigs and carols attend the lady in the lake, while the lady among the six-shooters goes by the name of Clementine, and *her* song also seems designed to keep the season. Now this is a formula so old that perhaps we may take it for granted; though I remember feelingly the Thin Man's Christmas of long ago and before that the gangsters in *Quick Millions* packing their pistols in hired wedding suits. We don't get the thrill from such violations that we did. Has the convention grown sleepy or are we ourselves more callous? Does not the modern Christmas invite savagery? Is there anything more in this speciality of Hollywood than the "good clean fun" of the English detective story? Just a little more, I am glad to say.

To jollification and death a third element must be added, sex: none of these films would be complete without it. Morbid? I don't know; *The Beggars' Opera* has never struck me as being so, and I doubt if *A Slight Case of Murder* predisposes any onlooker to violence. The association, in fact, touches the deeper springs of human motive, and by including fun goes a step forward in civilisation beyond the tumbril and the bull-fight. Whether the crime-wave in films is "harmless" or not I leave to the moralist and the sociologist to decide. My own opinion is that we should incline more to brutality without it. The Nazi executioners who strangled their victims to slow dance music were probably not addicts of the gangster film.

At any rate, a chorus of "O my darling, O my darling, O my darling Clementine" ushers in the violence of saloons, poker games, quick draws, wench-snatching and cattle-rustling in the old shack-town we know so well. The hackneyed theme is given a certain magnificence by John Ford's landscapes of sand and mountain and piled-up cloud, and by the unusual detail that consorts oddly with melodrama. Besides the shapes of cactus and stone one remembers Mr. Henry Fonda's lounging sheriff (marshal is the special word here); he brings to the part, when it allows, a reluctant but impervious force that shows itself even in the way he walks in or out of a room. The other characters hesitate between the stock attitudes of fiction and a verisimilitude more in keeping with time and place—the scrubby murderous cattle-thieves are the best of them. Half-a-dozen killings fulfil the prescription of violence, but all this action has a soft centre. The faithless saloon siren dies devoted, Clementine herself steps out of a growler and the pages of *Sunday at Home*, and instead of a chief villain we have a sort of secondary hero, a consumptive doctor looking for his quietus, in *Hamlet* and whisky and finding it on a barricade. *My Darling Clementine* is far too alive for an early Western, and not alive enough for Mr. Ford, though enjoyable at that.

The hero of *Lady in the Lake* is a private detective (dick, or plum pudding) whose destiny, needless to say, is to get hit on the head and make love to the heroine. He does both successfully; the love-making after the usual sour cracks and kicks that go with the role. Both the biffs and the kisses are emphasised by the fact that the camera is identified throughout with the hero, so that we experience the blackouts before parted lips or the blunt instrument descending: a new horror in close-ups. However, Mr. Robert Montgomery, taking the camera part, keeps well out of sight except for a hand always turning door-knobs, while Miss Audrey Totter circles round him and us gazing with fascinated blinkless eyes. They don't have to torture one another too much, or rather he is granted the privilege since all the beatings-up have fallen on him, and the three or four bodies are kept tucked away. He has to consider her a murderess and then innocent before really letting himself go with her. In the end he turns to writing horror stories at $200 a time: a step up, we are assured, for one of his profession. This is'nt at all a bad thriller of its kind, though I hope the camera "I" won't take on. I should hate to see the world though the eyes of Lassie or Miss Rita Hayworth or Mr. Frank Sinatra.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

RADIO NOTES

THE big Christmas "machines" have been well enough in their way—a way we have come to take for granted, together with the dimness of waits, the impatience of adults with present-giving, the almost unavoidable nastiness of the presents themselves, and the generally *ersatz* quality of latter-day Yule. If programmes like *Bethlehem* and *Christ's Comet* fail to touch us very nearly, that is at least in part our own fault. The failure is not merely one of imagination: for so many people to-day the Nativity is a miracle that no longer works; as a symbol it effuses beauty, but generates very little moral activity. What remains is a rootless occasion for jinks, and a programme like *How to Cope with Christmas* showed, among other things, how dispiritingly low these are. The funnier this broadcast became—and most of it was riotously amusing—the sadder appeared the underlying picture of English life today. I think it was a sign of courage on the part of Stephen Potter and Joyce Grenfell to have retained or adapted so much of last year's programme, on the assumption that *le mieux est l'ennemi du bien*. The start (again) was a bit wobbly; some of the scenes of married life were rather embarrassing; and the narrator took a senti-

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mental tone which was out of style with the rest. But the brilliant shop scenes were, if anything, an improvement on last year's; and my only criticism of Mrs. Trübel's speech is that it was too short.

It is at least possible that radio is replacing print with an increasing number of people; but even if this is true (and one hopes it isn't) there must always remain an important minority for whom the spoken word, used discursively, is tediously slow. For this reason things like book reviews, and other talks in which it is the material that chiefly matters, are perhaps a mistake in the Third Programme, whose audience is composed largely of inveterate readers. George Burchett on Tattooing, Desmond MacCarthy on Max Beerbohm, Jean Schlumberger on Paul Valéry—such performances as these are an entirely different matter; however discursive, they are essentially dramatic in aim and method, and in them the personality of the speaker is almost as important as what he is saying. Incidentally, the Valéry memorial programme struck me as first-rate, no less for what I must call the "posthumous audibility" of the poet himself (usually his speech was all but unintelligible) as for Cecil Day Lewis's delivery of his own translation of that arcane masterpiece *Le Cimetière Marin*. One only wishes Valéry himself could have heard this amazing *tour de force*.

A French friend was telling me recently of the great interest taken in the Third Programme in France—whenever and wherever it can be received. I could not help wondering whether our enormously powerful European transmitter might not be better employed in relaying the Third Programme every evening, than in putting out more direct and probably much less effective propaganda.

After the disastrous adaptation of Mr. George Millar's *Maquis*, I looked forward to *Moondrop to Gascony* without enthusiasm. I am glad to say I was wrong: this proved an excellent broadcast, skilfully written and smoothly produced. Miss Cécile Chevreau was admirably natural and conveyed very well the charming modesty of Miss Anne-Marie Walters's original narrative.

Stravinsky's new symphony was all too precisely what one would expect from a composer who has committed himself to the following categorical statement: "I hold music to be essentially powerless to express anything whatsoever, be it a feeling, an attitude, a state of mind, or a natural phenomenon." What wonder that a spiritual condition of such evident bankruptcy should produce music of a determined vacuity! Mastery of the orchestra only aggravates the offensiveness of these brittle, charmless, logarithmic movements.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

Correspondence

THE CASE FOR MR. BEVIN

Sir,—The early date of printing of the Christmas number of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION caught me unawares, and I missed the opportunity of replying to the correspondence on "The Case for Mr. Bevin" last week. May I make a few points now?

The claim put forward in your editorial that the traditional policy of the Labour Party was "Russia, right or wrong," was dealt with by Mr. Raymond Blackburn. But you said also that my view conflicted with election pledges. I can only say that the pledges must have been of a peculiar kind.

Did any Labour candidate, at a time when the war with Japan was still on and when we were living on Lend-Lease, pledge himself not to co-operate with America? Didn't all of them pledge themselves to support Uno? Like many others, I stated in my election speeches that I thought a Labour Government would get on better with Russia than a Conservative one, and I believe that is being demonstrated. The reason, of course, is that the Labour Government has a political faith every bit as ardent as the Russians, and that, where sincerity is shown on both sides from the outset, compromise can be reached.

You rightly stated, in the same article, that I based my case on the need for building up a "genuinely democratic United Nations." But in saying that I believed a "Socialist Government is bound to agree more often with the U.S.A. than the U.S.S.R." you ignored a vital qualification. I said that it was while the machinery of Uno was in the making that opposition to Russia would be more frequent. If the economic organs of Uno are to curb predatory enterprise in the way it is intended, we may well find ourselves frequently on the same side as Russia and in opposition to the United States, or in opposition to both. My point is that that stage has not yet been reached.

I should like to correct one impression my article may have given. In saying that Marxist philosophy was largely discredited I did not mean that all Marx's teaching had been in vain. I meant that the narrow materialist view of history evolved by Marx's disciples is no longer widely accepted. I was using "Marxist" in the same way that "Mendelian" is used to cover deductions from Mendel's teaching which he himself never made. Marx's life and writings are a source of inspiration to all Socialists, but not a text book.

In that connection, Mr. Archibald Robertson's letter in your issue of December 21st illustrates admirably the tendency I oppose. To him the political machinery by which Socialism is brought about is a matter of "expediency," and the Labour Party's adherence to constitutional method is a piece of "MacDonaldism." If that were the view even of a considerable minority, then certainly the party would be split in the way your editorial implies; for the official policy of the party is the exact opposite. Wouldn't it be better for those candidates who hold Mr. Robertson's view to make it plain before the next General Election?

If I have understood the discussion aright, the main points of difference are two. The "rebels" are sceptical of Uno, and they believe we are tied to the United States. I believe that Uno is developing on the right lines and that its success depends largely on how resolutely and unreservedly we use it. I do not believe we are tied to the United States.

We are, and have been for generations, dependent on her for different kinds of supplies: our boot and shoe industry alone relies almost entirely on American machinery and American spare parts. But since when has national self-sufficiency been a tenet of Socialism? We have obtained desperately needed help on terms which leave us the freedom of action necessary to protect ourselves against a slump in so far as such protection is possible; it is up to us to take action in time. Standardisation of arms merely emphasises the fact that at no time for a century have we entertained a policy which could lead us into war with the United States, and that we do not entertain one now.

House of Commons. AIDEN CRAWLEY

Sir,—I suspect that my colleague, Mr. Crawley, has not been long enough in the Labour Party to realise that his apologia for the Government's foreign policy has thrown overboard our Socialist principles as well as our election pledges. But I have been in the party for twenty-eight years and have most of that time worked closely with our leaders in matters of foreign affairs, and therefore realise the full enormity of the "stay in 1931" that is being conducted in the domain of foreign and defence policy.

In its report on the *International Post-War Settlement*, which was summed up in *Let Us Face the Future*, the Labour Party said that, "Socialism is a fundamental necessity for the attainment of our international aims and in particular in order to get rid of Fascism and all forms of political slavery," and to "promote the spread of democracy and political freedom." In Europe the report also states that, "the Labour Party works for a Socialist future" because it is convinced that, "war is inherent in the nature of capitalist society" and that, "only as the framework of our civilisation is Socialist can we hope

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At the present moment Socialist reconstruction is going on in most countries of Europe through Coalition Governments that have issued from the Resistance Movements. They are doing the job through the Trade Unions and the Co-operatives. Communist Parties or Communists and Socialists working together are the dominant political factor in these Governments. *The Times* carried out a thorough investigation of these regimes through special correspondents this summer and published their conclusions, which were that whatever might be the defects of these regimes as judged by British standards of tolerance and civil liberty, they did represent "government of the people, by the people, for the people"; they contained in them the seeds of liberty and progress; and there was no alternative to them except reaction, an attempted come-back by Fascism, civil war and chaos.

But, says Mr. Crawley, "In the Government's view the freedom of political democracy—freedom of speech, equality under the law, free elections—are the basis of Socialism, and without them totalitarian dictatorship is inevitable whatever economic system is imposed."

That was the pretext on which Mr. Churchill intervened in Russia: The Bolsheviks had established a dictatorship and we must therefore back the Czarist Generals and encourage the Japanese to invade Siberia in order to help the Russian people free themselves from foreign influences and settle their future by democratic means through a constituent assembly. We were not, it was explained again and again, taking sides between Right and Left, nor backing counter-revolution against revolution.

Mr. Churchill went into Greece, as Mr. Morgan Phillips has just approvingly told the world in his letter on Labour's foreign policy, in order "to prevent the Communist minority from imposing a dictatorship."

By casting the Communists, who happen to represent a crucial part of the working-class leadership in Europe, and without whom Socialist reconstruction is impossible, for the role of the enemy, the Labour Government finds itself, with Mr. Churchill's hearty approval and support, lining up on the side of reaction and Fascism, and in the name of democracy trying to force the Governments of Eastern Europe to legalise the counter-revolution, which would set the stage for a new civil war and a new bid for power by those whom the Allies' victory defeated in Europe.

The Labour Party opposed intervention against the revolution in Russia. But the Bevin-Churchill under-the-counter coalition is becoming the White Hope of the Black Internationale, and assuming the moral leadership of the counter-revolution in Europe to-day, amidst the hosannas of the Crawleys, Blackburns and other new recruits to the Party—and all, of course, in the name of liberty, democracy and western civilisation.

The Communists have six million votes behind them in France, including nearly all the working class votes, and are in complete control of the Trade Unions, which are playing a crucial part in reconstruction. They are the largest party in the country. Their position in Czechoslovakia is similar. They are two million strong in Italy and again have most of the working class behind them and are in control of the Trade Unions. They are in complete control in Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and in a key position in Rumania and Poland, where the Socialists are co-operating with them (as are the Socialists of Czechoslovakia and the majority of the Italian Socialists). It is really time the Labour Party made up its mind what it wants to do about these facts.

Do we want a new war of intervention in Europe, which is what the Tories are clamouring for and which would end in a third world war? Is Mr. Churchill right in claiming that the Government's attitude to European Communism is the same as his own? If not, we must treat the Communist Parties of Europe as legitimate representatives of the workers of Europe on the same footing as the Socialists. Fight, or make friends, or fall between two stools are the alternatives between which we must choose. And we should choose in the light of our Socialist principles and our election pledges and of the wishes of the workers of this country.

Democracy should begin at home. To start with, the Government should pay some attention to the foreign policy on which the Labour Party won the general election. That would be a more effective contribution to the spread of freedom and democracy in Europe than writing snotty Notes to Poles, Bulgarians, Rumanians, etc., about how to run their elections—with the cesspool of Greece stinking to high heaven under their noses.

K. ZILLIACUS

House of Commons.

Sir,—M. Crawley's article in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, December 7th, about the "rebel" policy of creating a central bloc appears to me to contain a number of gratuitous or irrelevant assumptions.

First of all, the idea that a central bloc would be of no use in a war may be perfectly right, but then we all know that *nothing* would be of any use in that case, and that particularly Britain and France would certainly be blotted out of material existence. The point, as far as I gathered, for a central bloc, is precisely *to avoid* a war!

Then, the second point, the rather whimsical idea that both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. might not *like* a central bloc, seems a rather weird primer in the field of foreign politics or even human relationships, as most nations or peoples are generally doing things other nations or persons do not like; people whose philosophy of life consists in pleasing other people do not generally get very far. On the other hand, people and nations generally get quickly accustomed to things they should have liked to prevent at the moment those things happened.

But, when M. Crawley seems to think that American isolationism, or non-isolationism, is a matter of whim, or "liking," instead of a necessary result of the actual state of their mercantile economy, I am afraid he lapses into a definitely idealistic and slightly out-of-date approach to things political.

The same, of course, applies to his assumption (following the Wilsonian line of M. Attlee's answer to M. Crossman) that Uno is the answer to all questions concerning world balance of power. Up to now, Uno has shown itself very useful as a chessboard to define the real situation of world power politics, but the trouble has been precisely inside Uno just as much as on the surface of this planet, that there were only *two* players at the game.

Then the idea that a central bloc would have to "make a start by abandoning Eastern Europe to Russian control" is of course rather childish; the very point of a central group (bloc is a very bad term for a non-imperialistic association) is that it should be open at both ends. And I rather think a central group, with an internal economy running on Socialist lines, and promoting all over the world a libertarian Socialist ideology, would have much more chance of influencing towards the democratic way of life the Eastern European countries, than American or British capitalist dollar or sterling diplomacy can have, which may register considerable success in the way of protecting Western vested interests, but will certainly fall short of bringing actual freedom to the people of these countries. (And it still remains to be seen whether a policy of financial facilities for western interests cannot and *must* not precisely be coupled in these countries to an even more drastic policy of *political* totalitarianism.)

As for M. Crawley's pious hopes about the *American* capitalist system (why not *the* capitalist system?) not going to be imposed by the force of arms, the answer surely is that there are many ways, set aside sheer violence, of pushing a world into war. But then M. Ghavam's peaceful "tickle test" in Azerbaijan shows that violence also may not be excluded.

C. BOURDET

Editor, *Octobre*, Paris.

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BRITAIN AND DISARMAMENT

Sir,—I think you are less than fair to Sir Hartley Shawcross in your comments on the disarmament debate in New York. The British delegation on the spot certainly did not feel that he had put it in an embarrassing situation.

What seems to have been overlooked is that, if Sir Hartley had not proposed his resolution there and then, Mr. Molotov might well have got the Assembly to vote for his amendment, i.e. for the inclusion of the word "armaments" in the text which was then under discussion. That would have been very awkward, because at that stage the "verification" clause did not provide for verification and inspection to precede the giving of information, but vice versa; nor did it provide that day to day inspection should be free from the veto.

Neither we nor, *a fortiori*, the U.S. could have accepted that, but the Assembly might well have wanted to vote it, and we and U.S., in opposing it, would have been made to appear anxious to hold the whole thing up. That is almost certainly why Mr. Molotov thought it worth while to cut an important dinner party in order to move the amendment.

Sir Hartley, by his quick counter-move, turned the tables on Mr. Molotov, who spent the rest of the evening explaining why he could go no further than to "accept in principle" the Shawcross resolution. This was the first occasion in the conference when we got the initiative from the Russians, from a propaganda point of view, on a popular issue.

Such risk as there was affected U.S. more than ourselves, and after all the U.S. delegation could have intervened at any moment had they thought it necessary. It was conceivable that Mr. Molotov might have accepted Sir Hartley's motion in order to oblige U.S. to disclose information on atom bombs, but in return he would have had to commit his government to the prior establishment of an international system of inspection, free from the veto. If this had occurred, it would have been an immense step forward. Mr. Molotov, however, did not feel able to agree at that moment, and we gained a moral initiative in the Assembly which was most welcome.

The proceedings were so involved and moved so rapidly that only a few people completely grasped every detail at the time. Sir Hartley was certainly one of those few, so that it is rather irritating to find it said that his impetuosity got us into difficulties. I think that, on the contrary, he extricated us from what might have been a quite false position.

I knew of no reason to suppose that Mr. Bevin was in any way alarmed when he learned immediately afterwards what had taken place. K. G. YOUNGER

House of Commons. (Member, U.K. Delegation)

PUT OUT MORE FLAGS

SIR,—I read with great interest your leading article in last week's issue of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and feel that you should be complimented on a balanced survey of the position. But you do not point out the most significant feature in the coal situation during the life of the present Government, and that is the unique part played by the National Union of Mineworkers in obtaining the increased output during the past twelve months.

I should be the last person to deny the effective part played by Mr. Shinwell, the Minister of Fuel and Power, in this difficult situation, but surely it must be admitted that without the effective co-operation of the National Union of Mineworkers the position could not have been tackled successfully. Last winter the Union appointed a National Production Officer and Production Officers in the Areas. The salaries of the National Production Officer and eight of the Area Officers, who were appointed for six months, were paid for out of the funds of the Union. Indeed, the Minister of Fuel and Power himself, addressing the Miners' Annual Conference last June, paid a tribute to the work of the Union, and especially that of Mr. A. L. Horner, the National Production Officer. In addition, leaflets and posters were also prepared explaining to the mineworkers the importance of increased coal production. Moreover, during the past year the National Union of Mineworkers has taken the initiative in organising a large number of meetings and demonstrations in every coalfield in the country.

The fact that the National Union of Mineworkers is the first trade union to use its own funds (about £20,000 was spent last winter) to assist in a production drive is surely worthy of mention.

WILL LAWTHER,
President, National Union of Mineworkers

PALESTINE PUNISHMENT

Sir,—Whatever one's views on corporal punishment as applied in this country, may I submit that the sentence of the recent Jerusalem Military Court on a Jewish youth for distributing subversive leaflets to one month's imprisonment and 12 "cuts" with the cane is neither good justice nor good policy. It is bad justice to inflict corporal punishment for an offence which even in the eyes of the Tribunal did not deserve more than one month's imprisonment. It is bad policy to inflict corporal punishment at all in a community almost 100 per cent of which originates from countries which consider it as the most degrading relic of the past and have abolished it years ago.

Surely, the more strongly one condemns the terrorist activity of the Palestinian extremists, the more essential it is not to provoke the moderate elements of the population there by sentences which rightly or wrongly are bound to be considered as unnecessarily harsh. S. V. STURTZ

THE B.B.C. AND RUSSIA

Sir,—Christmas being the season of goodwill, the B.B.C. chose the 9 o'clock news on Sunday Dec. 22 to reach what is surely a record "low" in Anti-Soviet propaganda.

After references to Christmas solely in terms of food and drink—for us, turkeys being unloaded at ports, for "the more fortunate Germans" rabbits, vodka, *Schnapps*—we learned that in Moscow, apart from the *handful* of churches open, the *religious* side of Christmas was non-existent: Stalin's birthday, not Christ's, was the important celebration.

For viciousness this could hardly be beaten, but just in case any doubts were left we were handed out part of a speech by the Pope "to cheering thousands" in which anti-clericals and Communists were charitably labelled "Anti-Christ." In connection with the B.B.C.'s reference to Stalin's birthday *The Times* Correspondent for Monday 23rd says that "His birthday passed, as usual, without comment . . ."

26 Norham Road, Oxford. J. B. BROWN

JAPANESE WAR CRIMINALS

Sir,—According to a recent report from Singapore, one of the Japanese war criminals, Lieutenant-Colonel Yanagida, has been sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.

Almost all the ex-prisoners of No. 2 Railway Construction Group in Siam will remember the "little Colonel" very well, and many perhaps will be surprised at such a comparatively heavy sentence.

It is possible of course, from evidence now available and presented to the court that his guilt is very clear; but I am quite sure that many "other ranks" (I do not pretend to speak for the officers) believed, in the years 1942–45, that Yanagida did his best to secure better conditions for his charges, fighting a losing battle against apathy in the P.O.W. Administration and against ruthless dictation from the far more powerful railway engineers.

If this be so, while I have no desire to detract in any way from the just condemnation of the accused Japanese officers, I would not wish to see the undue or inequitable punishment of one who (it seemed to us then) attempted to alleviate those conditions in which so many of our comrades suffered and died.

I hope, therefore, that adequate proceedings of these trials at Singapore (at present reported very briefly) will be made available eventually, so that we may know that any apparent miscarriage of justice is not really so. JOHN C. SHARP

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"I FELT," says Mr. Pritchett, "like someone who comes out of the darkness into some bright and crowded room, where things and people become ineffaceably vivid; and it was that dazzled moment of entry that I sought to set down when I wrote." And in another paragraph of *The Living Novel* (Chatto and Windus; 8s. 6d.) he calls himself, not a critic, but an "ordinary reader who has some private axe to grind"; he "puts intensity of experience before everything else." In fact, he likes books.

This may sound a little ridiculous, but it is a distinction all the same. For most writers who write about books—no matter whether they wish to call themselves critics or not—leave a very different impression. They like writing, perhaps; and find that someone else's book does the work of a knitting-needle. They can suspend their own thoughts from it; they can manipulate it so as to enchain the right number of rows, turn the difficult corners, and define a pattern. Or they like applying their own ideas to an author and marking him in a kind of Common Entrance to good opinion. But simply to like books is hardly ever considered a fine enough reason for writing about them; probably because it is assumed that artists take little trouble, and so deserve little credit, over the things they like.

But to say that Mr. Pritchett likes books is altogether too tepid. He uses his liking as one uses a capacity for friendship; his affection builds upon it. Is the book a little shy? He warms it with sympathy. Is it stiff? He finds an unexpected tenderness to redress the balance. Nobody has written more persuasively about Arnold Bennett, let us say, or taken greater trouble to attach a fresh epithet to Scott. What he writes about Scott, indeed, is so representative of his method and its consequences that it is worth observing a little more closely. He would like us to find Scott to be a captivating writer—at first sight not by any means Scott's most conspicuous quality. And first, to win sympathy, he confirms us in error:

> At sixteen we are in love with those sexless heroines with their awful school-mistressy speeches. We are in love with those stick-in-the-mud heroes whose disinterestedness and honour pervert the minds of boys with a tedious and delusive idealism. One grows up in the day-dream that Scott has generated to discover it is a swindle; and one never forgives him.

But then there is the other side. Scott, he says,

> belongs to that very small group of our novelists—Fielding and Jane Austen are the chief of them—who face life squarely. They are grown up. They do not cry for the moon.

And from this point he builds up a fresh figure of easily apprehensible greatness. The granite figure of Scott is wheedled into the right pose, and the trick is done. We shan't again make the mistake of thinking of him as an historical novelist; we shall look with special care at his secondary characters; we shall read *The Highland Widow* for tragedy and *The Antiquary* for a show of his gift as one of the great comic writers; and we shall peg him to his place with a final generalisation: he is not "a writer from the outside looking in," but a complement to Richardson, "an analytical and psychological novelist who describes to us the part of our motives formed by public events."

You see how the trick works. It is, in the flattering sense, a confidence-trick, depending on whether or no you accept Mr. Pritchett's judgment. If you don't you may only be exasperated by his capacity for enjoyment, by the circumference of his hat and the number of rabbits in it.

He is equally remote from scientific criticism and the criticism of æsthetic response; therefore he is easy to accuse of waywardness, of vulgarisation. To clear him in general of such charges it is only necessary to compare him with an austerer critic, for example Charles du Bos, who shared many of Mr. Pritchett's enthusiasms. Let us examine a phrase from du Bos's diary for 1922:

> I have lived on a capital of ideas that had accumulated for well-nigh fifteen years, and the ease, the buoyancy almost, with which I committed them to paper, carried me through, up to now, without any sense that I was ever repeating myself.

The point here is, of course, not that the mind of du Bos was better filled or worse, but that, once filled, he could treat his store as a treasure to be cashed and spent. Du Bos, had he written on Scott at any length, would have drenched himself in Lockhart, considered how far Scott was indebted to *The Man of Feeling*, edged his way, with exquisite divination, right through the novels and the correspondence, and through each dark alley of nineteenth-century criticism. He would have written an admirable essay built entirely on books, on the criss-cross of literary sensitivities, on the minds of other people extended over his own. Mr. Pritchett does nothing of the kind. He neither squanders nor invests his intellectual treasure, but uses it as a means of bringing books and real life into touch with one another. *The Living Novel* is thus a singularly exact title. It conveys a method which, so far as I recall, has never been so thoroughly applied: a method which cannot in any event be called vulgarisation. Mr. Pritchett is certainly not trying to save his readers trouble by directing them to a handful of masterpieces and arming them with appropriate excuses for never trying their luck elsewhere; he is perfectly aware that "people who read only the best authors normally let one know it"; no, his method is to wander attentively along the course of fiction, stopping, when he feels like it, to talk about the landscape—for one does not, he suggests, catechise a landscape, one accepts and discusses it. Mr. Pritchett is the picturesque traveller, the William Gilpin of literary criticism. He plays with the idea of moving a plantation or levelling a hill-top; the unexpected neatness of a ruin makes him digress; he is a tireless climber after views. Above all, having enjoyed the diversity of the journey, he carries both the enjoyment and the differing airs of the country into his own prose.

Wayward? Yes, in a sense. Gosse's *Father and Son* has turned into fiction; Whitman is a novelist because he reported the Civil War in *Specimen Days;* on the other hand, Jane Austen, Tolstoy, James and Proust have moved Mr. Pritchett he says, but not to the labour of writing about them. Thackeray seems to have done even less. These inconsistencies are felt, not because they give the book a certain untidiness, but because Mr. Pritchett is at his best upon large classic themes. He is good on Galt, but better on Turgeniev. After all, the *living* novel is not only a kind, but a commitment, which no amount of prefatory modesty can disclaim.

As it stands, Mr. Pritchett's territory begins with the professional Fielding and ends with an amateur, J. Meade Falkner. These frontier posts, I suspect, have a certain symbolic value for him. "I doubt," he says, when he comes later on to consider nineteenth-century fiction, "if any Victorian novelist has as much to teach the modern novelists as George Eliot," and, although he is not out to instruct, it is apparent that his response to the ordinary slipshod, hopeful novel of any period is again that of Gilpin to the straggled copse or botched perspective. From Fielding to Dickens, from Richardson to George Eliot, as he goes he stops over the eccentric Day, the frightening Hood, Disraeli brewing up "the superb and the operatic"; over Smollett and Galt and Scott. A personal list, you will notice, a list which points Mr. Pritchett's double penchant for the first-rate and the extravagant. On the way he throws off admirable asides. Thus the most ingenious comment on Dickens does not occur in the analysis of *Edwin Drood*, but in a study of Smollett, at a moment when Rowlandson's illustrations have suddenly reminded him of Cruikshank. Cruikshank, he says, "upsets all the weary pieties of realism that lie between us and a comprehension of Dickens; half the silly criticisms of Dickens need never have been written if Cruikshank had been studied as closely as the text."

Among the pleasures of reading Mr. Pritchett is this unexpected resourcefulness of his. One would not expect enclosed in a chapter on *Sandford and Merton*, a gloss upon the dominance during the eighteenth century of the idea of Man; nor the appearance of the Houyhnhnms in the world of the *Irish R.M.*; nor the account of Arthur Morrison's East End novels to open with so fine a precision:

> Over those lower dwellings the London sky, always like a dirty window, is larger; the eyes and hands of people are quicker, the skins yellower, the voices are as sharp as scissors. Every part of London has its smell, and this region smells of rabid little shops, bloated factories, sub-let workrooms and warehouse floors; there is also the smell of slums, a smell of poverty, racy but oftener sour; and mingling with these working odours, there arises an exhalation of the dirty river which, somewhere behind these streets and warehouses and dock walls, is oozing towards the flats of the Thames estuary like a worm.

That is all part of Mr. Pritchett's habit of liking books. He does not try to stalk them; he expects them to come and meet him confidently halfway.

It is not surprising that he has some excellent things to say about the Russians. His view of Dickens's world as a world of solitaries has already brought it sympathetically close to Shchedrin's; his liking for Day prepares him for Goncharov; he is at his best on Turgeniev. From hints which he has dropped elsewhere we know that the solutions achieved by these enchanting writers are especially congenial to him; that their view of the individual struggle to fit into a general pattern of society is always able to stimulate his attention. The titles of some of these essays—"The Hypocrite" for *The Golovlyov Family*, "The Great Absentee" for *Oblomov*—echo the mood in which Mr. Pritchett has been lately writing about the Future of Fiction, suggesting that it might well be linked to a revival of the character types whom we recognise in Bunyan and Molière; and perhaps the most poignant essay in the book is that called "The Russian Day," which stresses the freedom of the Russian novel from tyrannies of plot and contrivance, its easy control of living-space and living-time.

Mr. Pritchett has less in common with the French. Murger contains the right kind of lively disorder for him—Murger is as nearly an English novelist as any in the French language—but despite his patient wish to be fair he is not fired by Anatole France or Mérimée or Balzac, the curious trio who complete this section of the book. He reveals himself in a chance phrase: "The French novelists are the lawyers of the passions." For he has not—why should he have?—the temperament which enjoys that cruel region in which the French novelists have no rival. There is all the difference in the world between warmth and fire, between that which fosters and that which *may* consume, between the bigness appropriate to the English novel and that to the French. Where they reinforce one another at all it is usually by a misunderstanding; where they diverge is the moment in which they are most themselves. And it is not in the least surprising that Mr. Pritchett, who so exactly comprehends the golden quality of the English novel, the heartening, cranky, Protestant side of it, should perceive less acutely the singeing heat of the French. I began by calling Fielding a professional. So, by our standards, he is; but it is only on reading Balzac that one realises in how positive a sense Balzac was not an Old Etonian.

One Italian, Giovanni Verga completes *The Living Novel*. There is no German. The classic German novelists have not been read in England for a long time now; they share with Scott the reputation of being unreadable. I can think of no-one better equipped than Mr. Pritchett to show the poverty of this verdict, to uncover what is still alive in *Wilhelm Meister* and *Heinrich von Ofterdinsen* and *Witiko*. That's the way it is with this kind of book: *l'appétit vient en mangeant.*

ALAN PRYCE-JONES

THE WRONG KIND OF NONSENSE

Existentialism. By GUIDO DE RUGGIERO. *Secker & Warburg.* 6s.

The complicated meaning and overtones of this fashionable word "Existentialism" spring from two main sources. In the first place there is the contrast between "existence" and "essence," between the particular and the universal. Throughout the history of philosophy you have recurrent reminders to the effect that you cannot derive the particular existent from the abstract properties which it is alleged to "have," or of which it is said to be an "instance," and we are constantly being reminded that the "laws of nature," which science promulgates, are abstract schemes which apply to, but do not account for, particular things. The whole problem is confused by the very terms in which we do our thinking, and nowadays it is tackled by logical analysis of the propositions in which abstract terms occur. The result is that the opposition between "existence" and "essence" is, to the logician, somewhat unreal. However that may be, we can recognise two attitudes of mind: that of the generaliser, who speaks of "man," "being," "reason" and so on, and that of the man who says: where do I, as a particular, unique, specific individual, with my thoughts, my decisions, and my private experience, which is certainly not an instance of experience in general, come in? The existentialists are insisting that we must leave the abstractions, the generalisations and the investigation into "essential" qualities, and come down to the brass tacks of existence itself.

The second source of the meaning of "existentialism" may be said to follow from the carrying out of the first requirement. When we do come down to existence as it is actually lived through, we find that certain experiences are more significant than others. It is at this point that the existentialists go back on their own insistence on sticking to experience and avoiding generalisations. Having discovered some experience which they have severally found significant to themselves, they proceed to generalise it, with the result that they end up by constructing systems far more fantastic than those which they condemn. The significant experiences, which they believe to be in some sense revelatory, are those in which we make choices. It is choosing rather than thinking that is important to the existentialist attitude, because it is in such experiences that we feel and exhibit our individual distinctiveness. Furthermore when we are involved in a situation in which a choice has to be made, we may sometimes have a sense of our own unimportance, of the unattainability of our aims, of demands upon us which we cannot fulfil. If we believe in God, we may have a sense of our limitations compared with His immensity; if we do not believe in God we may be struck by the futility of human effort—are we not as grass, and shall we not wither? Now these experiences are, according to the existentialists, revelatory of our true nature; they are moments when we truly *exist*, they are experiences of *Existenz*. So that existentialism is a philosophy which (1) claims (unjustifiably) that it is concerned with actual life as it is lived, and not with abstractions, and (2) is specially concerned with the implications of those moments when life is lived in some special and revealing way, which is different from mere living.

So far, so good. Actual existence may be distinguished from theorising, and some experiences may have some meaning for the person who experiences them, which others have not, and we might allow that these special experiences are in some obscure sense "more real" than the others. Now, however, comes the major difficulty. The existentialists pick out as revealing experiences ones which are by no manner of means universal, and they build their vast horrific systems upon these, as though they were revelatory of the predicament of "mankind" in general. Kirkegaard, from whom the movement derives its distinctive features, was an unhappy man, obsessed with a sense of sin, and unable to find relief from the clash of opposites which he sensed within himself—finite capacity, infinite aspiration, and so forth. All his choices were envisaged by him as a hopeless attempt to transcend his limitations. He also had the sense of an Other, towards Whom he hopelessly aspired. This appalling confrontation gave rise, not unnaturally, to a feeling of *Angst*.

Jaspers, who is more like Kirkegaard than the other existentialists, in his *Philosophie*, discusses the study of *Existenz* as a mode of philosophising. Again we have the contrast between mere existence and significant existing, but he introduces other people, and the network of communications which develop between them, and his emphasis on the experience of another person *as* separate other person is of some interest. However, for him too the choices by which we attempt to transcend mere existence are doomed to "shipwreck," though there looms some adumbration of a God, Who serves only to make everything more poignant. But let us not be disheartened. It is, we are told, a human privilege to prepare for and suffer shipwreck, and to accept our fate.

Heidegger, with whom Sartre classes himself, will have no truck with an Other. No, with perfect existentialist logic he argues that there is nothing there, therefore what is there is Nothing. Existence is somehow born from Nothing, and for some unknown reason—but quite as we should expect—it is guilty. We are plagued by this guilt of mere temporal existence, and suffer *Sorge*, or care, because really we are only running away from death, and are not quite sure that we are running fast enough. There is, however, a path to freedom, which those of us who are sufficiently enlightened will follow: we are free to accept the idea of our death, and thus, in a measure, flout our fate. Why the gas-oven is to be avoided I do not know.

Sartre, with whom Ruggiero does not deal in the essay that has just been translated, is the most interesting of them all. There is a great deal of nonsense about *le Néant*, a great deal of dreary word-spinning, which may impress the unwary, but there is a great deal of penetrating psychological analysis about our preoccupation with the figure we cut in the eyes of other people, and the notion, which he develops in his *L'Existentialisme est un Humanisme*, that man creates his own morality is one of great interest.

Ruggiero's essay is welcome because the name of Existentialism is becoming familiar, and we all want to know what this new thing is. He deals with Kirkegaard, Jaspers and Heidegger, and also with Marcel, who is a Catholic and develops a slightly different version, emphasising the first of the meanings of existentialism rather than the second. The snag about Ruggiero's essay is that it is too congested and too "brilliant." The humble student of philosophy is far more at home with the painstaking analysis of Sartre's *l'Etre et le Néant* by A. J. Ayer in *Horizon* (July and August 1945) than he is with Ruggiero's Roman candles, which glitter but do not illuminate. However it is better than nothing, and we must await a more commonsensical assessment. You remember the view once expressed that philosophy is bound to be nonsense, and the only question is: is it the right kind of nonsense? The answer in this case would seem to be in the negative—at any rate for those who are not sensitive to cosmic anguish when they make their choice. But then it might be argued that such people scarcely "exist," and it may well be that men and women on the Continent, who have had to make, during the last ten years, more desperate choices than we are used to making, will find in existentialism an echo of their own experience.

W. J. H. SPROTT

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THE ENGINEERS

The Story of the Engineers. By JAMES B. JEFFERYS. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 10s. 6d.

The engineers have a most interesting trade union history, which is closely related to the growth of the engineering industry as the pivot of modern technical progress. In the beginning, in the far-off days of James Watt, Brindley, and Telford, the word "engineer" meant primarily, not any sort of manual worker, but a military or civil engineer responsible for such works as fortifications, bridges, harbours, and other large-scale erections needing special skill in design. The word began to acquire its new meaning, without losing its old one, with the advent of the steam-engine, and still more of the locomotive and the marine engine. Large bodies of skilled men, working mainly in metal, but also partly in wood, were needed to make the new machines; and these men had to be trained. The first Trade Unions based on the new skill were called "Steam Engine Makers," and were formed in the 1820's, alongside the older Unions of Millwrights and Mill Mechanics, who had erected and kept in order machines still made mainly of wood. Out of the Journeymen Steam Engine Makers' Society of 1826 sprang by amalgamation the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, founded in 1851 and celebrated as the first example of the national "New Model" Trade Unionism based on high contributions, high friendly benefits, and centralised control of policy. Out of the A.S.E. came, in 1920, by further amalgamation, the Amalgamated Engineering Union, now nearly the largest Trade Union in Great Britain; and from the A.E.U. of 1920, which was still mainly composed of skilled workers, has developed the very different A.E.U. of to-day, with its aim of including all engineering workers and its vast enrolment during the war years of women as well as of less skilled men.

The engineers have fought hard battles on this road. No sooner was the A.S.E. formed than the employers set out to smash it by the great lock-out of 1852, when they presented the "document" compelling men to sign away their right to membership. Then came the great, successful struggle of 1872 for the Nine Hours' Day, and then the second big lock-out of 1897, which centred largely round what the employers called "managerial functions"—that is, the right of the employer to set any man or boy or woman he chose to man any machine without regard to trade union customs. Finally, there was the further national lock-out of 1922, fought during the post-war slump, mainly upon the same issues. In most of these contests the engineers were beaten—for the employers chose their times well. But the victories were largely barren, because solidarity in the workshops prevented any full exercise of the "rights" which the employers claimed.

All through the formative period—up to the 1890's and even largely up to 1914—the engineers held themselves somewhat aloof, not only from the wider Labour movement but also from the less skilled workers in their own industry. They were craftsmen, and proud of it; and their great difficulty in framing a policy to deal with the advance of semi-automatic machinery was that the skilled men, in many cases, were willing neither to work the new machines, which they regarded as beneath their dignity, nor to let them be worked by any one else. It took a long time, and many hard lessons, to persuade them

that the future lay with automatic machine operation, and that the tasks of the skilled men were to become mainly those of supervision, of tool-making, and of carrying out non-standardised or specially difficult tasks. As the lesson was learnt, mainly after 1918, the A.E.U. turned gradually from a Union of kindred crafts into an industrial Union welcoming every class of engineering worker irrespective of skill. The second World War completed the process begun by the first: and the A.E.U. passed speedily from the right to the left wing of the Trade Union movement.

Most of this story is well told by Mr. Jefferys, who has made a laudable attempt to tell it against the background of economic and technical change. His treatment of the earlier period, both before and after the foundation of the A.S.E., is somewhat slight, but gets the essential points. His account of dilution between 1914 and 1918 is a little confusing, and here he seems to have missed altogether a number of essential sources. (At any rate there is no sign of them in either his text or his bibliography). His later chapters do justice to the great and growing importance of the shop stewards, but say too little of their methods of working. Joint Production Committees are fairly, but rather sketchily, treated. As against this, the development of negotiating machinery about wages and conditions is well described, and so are the widening of the Union effectively to include women and less skilled male workers, and the struggles over the right to negotiate on behalf of apprentices as well as adults. Altogether, this book, though not a "flier," is a very creditable essay in the ill-tilled field of Trade Union history.

G. D. H. COLE

A FIFTH GOSPEL

King Jesus. By ROBERT GRAVES. *Cassell.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

This is a remarkable book, to be read by those only who can face with equanimity perturbing doctrines. Having ceased to believe in the inerrancy of the Four Gospels, Mr. Graves—well known already by *I Claudius* and *The Golden Fleece*—has worked out a history of his own, the central idea of which is that Jesus was, literally and legally, the King of the Jews. He was, it would appear, the legitimate grandson of Herod "the Great." His father was Herod's son Antipater, who had secretly married Mary, the so-called "Virgin." After Antipater had been savagely murdered by Herod—a murder which occasioned the famous saying of Augustus, that he would rather be Herod's swine than his son—Mary was protected by Joseph, who, though much older, married her, and for safety took her and the child down to Egypt.

It is at this point that Mr. Graves's book assumes its marked character. His authorities are, in the main, the Apocryphal Gospels like the Protevangelium, the Jewish Apocrypha such as the Wisdom of Ben Sirach or the Apocalypse of Baruch and the Odes of Solomon, the Talmudic accounts, and the Jewish traditions in general; but, where these fail, he fills up the gaps with conjectures, and the whole he narrates in the name of a second-century Jew whom he calls Agabus. The result is a work of great interest, with much of which, inevitably, many readers will disagree, but which is always instructive. It is a method which enables him to introduce much mythology. Thus Bethany is revealed to us as the House of Anath, and Anath as the consort of Yahweh; the Horse Leech as Lilith, once Adam's first wife and now a demon, and Rachel is a Canaanite goddess. Well may Agabus, or rather Mr. Graves in his own person, add "To the uninstructed what has been written will read strangely; but I write for the instructed."

As Herod is of so much importance in the story, Mr. Graves devotes to him many pages, based on Josephus and to some extent, I think, on Dion. Whencesoever derived, they will repay the closest attention. From there we pass to Egypt, all the wisdom of which, like Moses, the young Jesus is learning, and so to the return of the Family to Palestine, where Jesus argues with the Doctors of the Law, and becomes an Essene. Mr. Graves does not mention that Jesus ever saw Hillel, who ere long died, but he plainly regards it as certain that he learnt from him.

Gradually it was borne in on Jesus that if he was the King of the Jews it was necessary for him to fulfil the Old Testament prophecies. Already he had seen that his genealogy, whether traced through his mother or through his father, was regal. He must therefore be made to fulfil all the anticipations of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Psalms. Especially he must perform miracles, not least miracles of healing; nor was it long before he discovered that he had powers which in those days were considered requisite for the performance of such wonders. *Mclades imaginaires* yielded easily to his spells; his glance was sufficient to drive away the demons.

It was not long, therefore, before he had gathered round him a dozen disciples, who forsook their trades, and, trusting in alms, went about the villages of Galilee, winning disciples in their turn.

At last came the decisive moment. To assert his kingship, it was useless to assail a mere tetrarch like Herod Antipas. He must go to Jerusalem, and claim the whole realm of David; and this brought him at once into collision with the High Priests, who were Sadducees, and anxious above all things that nothing should occur to justify the Romans in "taking away their place and nation." One who arrogated to himself the title of King, and who boasted that he should reign for at least a thousand years, was not likely to be favourably regarded by Tiberius; nor was his doctrine of a future life, though it might perhaps have been accepted by the Pharisees, pleasing to those who believed in no Sheol, no Paradise, nor angel nor spirit. Hence the determination of the priesthood to get rid of him; and in Pilate the Procurator, a weak man, they found an easy tool. Thus came the end, marked by Jesus' despairing cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

There are a few points on which I must express total disagreement, for I think that Mr. Graves is actually mistaken in them. Iscariot is by no means certainly "the man of Kerioth," nor is Mr. Graves's explanation of Judas's conduct at all convincing; and why he retains the old interpretation of "casting the thirty pieces of silver to the potter" instead of "into the treasury" I do not know. "Zacharias the son of Barachias" whom the Jews slew between the Temple and the altar is, as is well known, one of the cruces for those who defend the accuracy of the Gospels; for Zacharias was not killed till two score years after the Crucifixion; Mr. Graves would have done well to omit all reference to the story. And no one would gather from his account that the words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" are, as Westcott saw, unquestionably a Western interpolation. More important than any of these is the daring assertion on the dust-cover, "This new solution of an ancient mystery—the only historical mystery with which everyone must at some time or other come to terms—will, it is hoped, set many troubled minds at rest." There are many other solutions which, however open to doubt, seem to me more likely to serve this comforting end than *Kirg Jesus*.

E. E. KELLETT

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MACMILLAN

UP THE REPUBLIC!

Ireland Her Own. An Outline History of the Irish Struggle for National Freedom and Independence. By T. A. JACKSON. *Cobbett Press.* 18s.

"Passive suffering," according to Yeats, "is not a theme for poetry." Most of us would agree that it is not a theme at all. Irish history contains far too much of it to be anything but nauseating, and it is not improved when written by the descendants of the victims. They would probably be less than human if they failed to rub it in and more than human if they were not degraded by doing so. Apart from specialised study, Irish history is much better left to English historians, and their conscientious scruples about how much of it they may suppress are the only revenge worthy of civilized people. The best feature of this new history, which its publishers claim to be the only scientific history of Ireland, is that it is written by an Englishman and a Marxist. The only truth worth while being the truth one tells against the grain, it is an exceedingly truthful book, and being Marxist, shows on the English side at least, a real awareness of the economic factors involved. It is not in the least "scientific" as it contains few references, and some of these are anything but reliable.

Mr. Jackson's left-wing views lead to a rather amusing but misleading shift of emphasis. Strafford, who by his conciliatory role, has endeared himself to Irishmen, is savaged, while Cromwell's monstrous orgy of blood, though described as "inexcusable" is instantly excused on the ground that he was probably in a hurry. Mr. Jackson's indignation at the "Royalist fiction" that the women and children of Wexford were massacred sounds rather ingenuous in the light of what happened after Naseby when all the Irishwomen discovered were butchered. His conclusions, I believe, are correct, but there is no necessity to alter the facts.

Where his book is weakest is in its uncritical attitude to the Gaelic system which I can assure him had nothing whatever in common with communism. If ever scientific history was needed it is here. Mr. Jackson is right in describing it not as "Irish" but as the ordinary way of life in pre-Roman Britain. In Ireland, in one form or another, it has continued down to our own day. When Christianity was introduced by St. Patrick its Latin book culture was called *legind* to distinguish it from *senchus*, the traditional oral culture with its magicians, poets and lawgivers. Within a short time the centralised diocesan system of St. Patrick, which did not fit into the Gaelic scheme of things, was replaced by a territorial monastic one under which all church property was controlled by the aristocracy. As a result *legind* almost disappeared while *senchus* regained its old power. Early in the twelfth century a magnificent attempt by a group of Munster and Ulster clerics, backed from within by the O'Briens, from without by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, to reimpose a European system of church government broke on the obstinate traditionalism of the O'Connors and O'Neills. After that *senchus* had no opposition. As late as the sixteenth century we find an agreement regarding the custody of Sligo Castle witnessed "on behalf of the poets of Ireland" who guarantee to satirise the defaulting party. As Mr. Jackson would realise if he had studied Gaelic literature, the traditionalists hated the common people of Ireland much more than they hated the English, and the real defence of Cromwell's ferocity is that it finally rid us of an intolerable tyranny and made life possible for those whom the Irish poets described as "the children of serfs." The pity is that neither Cromwell nor "the children of serfs" realised the possibilities of the situation. *Senchus*—traditionalism—is the main fact of Irish history, because by blinding the population to what was going on elsewhere, it made them the catspaws of reaction in Rome, St. Germain and Madrid. It was the Presbyterian and Protestant linking up of nationalism with the French Revolution which gave it reality, and Mr. Jackson rightly stresses the work of an Irish Socialist like Davitt in linking it up afresh with the struggles of the English workers. What Davitt would have thought of an Irish Trade Union Congress which rejected a resolution condemning Fascism or an Irish first minister who condoled with the German minister on the death of Hitler I leave Mr. Jackson to guess.

His optimistic view of the results which might be expected from a British withdrawal from Ulster I do not share at all. I think he is monstrously wrong in suggesting that but for the existence of Partition Ireland would have entered the war on the side of the Allies. On the contrary, I feel certain that we shall continue our historical role as catspaws of the Vatican, Franco and the *émigré* Polish Government. "Home Rule means Rome Rule" said the Orangeman in 1912. "*L'Église Catholique est la puissance No.* 1 *de l'Eire*," says a grim headline in a recent issue of a French newspaper. It may appear unpatriotic but I confess that I am rather relieved than otherwise that there is still a corner of Irish soil where a young Irishman may read the literature of his own country and of the world.

FRANK O'CONNOR

OLD SLAVERY DAYS

Lay My Burden Down. By B. A. BOTKIN. *Cambridge University Press.* 20s.

The title of this book is taken from a verse of a well-known Negro spiritual:

No more sickness
No more sorrow
When I lay my burden down.

And it is one of a number of important studies in the social history and folk-lore of the American Negro, and the problems of Black-White relationship, that have been published in the United States during recent years.

Lay My Burden Down, as the title suggests, is on the subject of slavery and emancipation. A very large body of material has been collected by workers of the Federal Writers' Project from the mouths of coloured people who were old enough to remember slavery. This book is a selection of extracts from it skilfully made by Mr. B. A. Botkin, President of the American Folk-Lore Society, to give a picture of the slave's life.

Many of us who were brought up among the ruins of this slave civilisation have sensed the corrupting infection in the air around us without being able to describe what it was that we felt. Books that help to reveal us to ourselves and explain our situation to us are rare. Yet the Southerner who reads Turgeniev always feels at home. The Russian names are strange, the eccentricity of character even greater than in the South; but something tells him *I have been here before*. It is the familiar air of serfdom he is breathing.

One of Turgeniev's great merits in this connection is that he does not tell us what a *serf* feels, but what a *man in the peculiar position of being a serf* feels. It was this that made the quiet and beautiful stories in *A Sportsman's Sketches* so immensely effective as propaganda. There are a good many books which try to tell us how a negro feels, as if this were somehow distinct from how a white man feels. But what we want so much to know (and what a Southern Turgeniev would

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CONTENTS

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have told us) is how a man, who happens to be born with a dark skin in the Deep South, or in Kenya or South Africa, feels. I still remember the excitement of reading James Weldon Johnson's autobiography, because it told me this. And *Lay My Burden Down* tells us this, too.

It also has some good stories and amusing "tall tales" to offer, as well as some interesting folk-lore. For instance myths have grown up about Lincoln. One is that before his election he travelled through the South in disguise to see the sorrows of the slaves for himself; and when he got back home wrote to the slave-owners warning them to be good to their slaves, for he was coming soon to release them, and had left his name written "for a sign." "And when they looked they found the name." Much of the story-telling is very vivid and racy. A man who is running away is said to "steal path an' go." A woman in the first excitement of freedom goes so fast that "a bird coulda sot on she dress tail." After emancipation "Right off coloured folks started on the move. They seemed to want to get closer to freedom, so they'd know what it was—like it was a place or a city."

Some of the life-stories of former slaves, which make up a large part of the book, are extremely moving, with real beauty in the simplicity and force with which they are told. A few of these old people remembered "slavery days" as some of us remember childhood, far away and safe and dear. But on the whole these narratives make very painful reading. They recall Dickens's terrible indictment of slavery (which would apply as well to all repressive forms of government) when he said that he knew that it was wrong for a man to have absolute power over other men, because he was a man and knew himself.

GAMEL WOOLSEY

THE PROBLEM OF JAPAN

Japan's Prospect. Edited by DOUGLAS G. HARING. Massachusetts: *Harvard University Press. Oxford University Press.* 22*s.* 6*d.*

This is really an abortive text-book for administrators who were not called upon to administer. It contains twelve essays by nine contributors, all lecturers at the School for Overseas Administration at Harvard University. The essays are the substance of lectures to army and navy officers training as military government officers at a time when it was expected that Japan would be occupied piecemeal and "the possibility that the entire Japanese governmental structure would be taken over intact was hardly envisaged." When Japan surrendered without invasion, General MacArthur scrapped this whole plan and appointed members of his own staff as chief administrators. It is interesting to speculate how many of the failures of the first year of occupation could have been avoided if full use had been made of these 2,500 men who had at least some background knowledge of Japan.

Having failed in their primary object, the writers have offered this book to the "intellectually alert minority of Americans," hoping they may be able to create a more rational public opinion with regard to Japan. It is an admirable book for this purpose, and if at the end the reader has no clearer idea of what Japan's prospect actually is, that is not the fault of the writers, but because the problem contains too many unknowns. At least he will be able to weigh up the chances of several alternative prospects.

The introductory chapter is a joint statement, attempting to sum up the psychological make-up of the Japanese. The writers conclude that there is a much higher degree of psychological homogeneity among Japanese than Westerners, but their efforts to solve "the dualism of sensitive intelligence and sadistic brutality"—to explain how the same man who lovingly tends a pot of morning glories is capable of hitting a Chinese woman with his rifle butt—are no more successful than other attempts I have read.

Edward A. Ackerman contributes two economic essays in one of which he takes the extreme case of Japan being sealed off in a second Tokugawa vacuum, and reaches the comforting conclusion that under such conditions it would still be *economically possible* for her present population to maintain its pre-war standard of living.

I emphasise the words "economically possible" because as Talcott Parsons shows in another essay, such a forcible squeezing of the industrial population back into the rural mould might set up intense social stresses and engender an impotent militarism. Nothing is more vicious than lust—either sexual or militarist—that continues after impotence has set in. The American correspondent Mark Gayn has reported how, immediately after the surrender, military officers took cover in the "grass roots" and received large tracts of army lands to farm in semi-military settlements.

Mr. Parsons thinks the two other possibilities are that after the withdrawal of the occupation forces the "urban peasantry" may revolt and set up a Soviet system which would "probably offer a pattern of hope to the Japanese masses" but which would retain for its own ends the old authoritarianism and militarism, or that a social democracy on the British model may be evolved. The third alternative he considers the most desirable but the most difficult.

F. M. Watkins takes a somewhat brighter view and argues from the progress made in the liberal twenties that at least Japanese are not allergic to constitutional democracy.

G. Nye Steiger contributes an orthodox outline of Japanese history and W. H. Chamberlin writes a colourless, factual account of Russian policies in the Far East. The editor is responsible for two essays, one on religion, magic and morale, and one on ideology. He traces the resemblance between the *Kami* idea and the Polynesian *mana*, but is rather inclined to see *Kami* everywhere, and his statement that "until very recently the tea ceremony was a prerogative of the divine upper class" is nonsense.

The best essay is one on farm tenancy by the only Japanese contributor, Seiyei Wakukawa. His thesis is that "tenancy has epitomised everything reactionary and retrogressive in Japan since the Meiji revolution." He brings out better than any other writer I have read the extreme local divergencies in tenancy practice, and the conclusion which he leaves the reader to draw, is the absolute necessity to unify tenancy on a national basis in such a way as to eradicate all feudal relics. This MacArthur has not begun to do.

Discussing international and imperialist problems, Carl J. Friedrich contrasts mildly the Cairo declaration that the three Great Allies "do not covet gains for themselves" with the present American claims to conquered Pacific islands. Speaking of Korea, he hits on the fundamental difference between American or British and Soviet occupation policy everywhere. "Here as elsewhere the Soviet Union's readiness to accept proletarian elements as promising material for political organisation is certainly more imaginative than the British or American tendency to assume that leadership presupposes a vigorous middle class."

Unfortunately it will probably not be the sweet if somewhat woolly reasonableness of these university lecturers which will determine America's policy towards Japan, but rather power politics as played by MacArthur.

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The Stock Exchange Official Year Book, 1946. *Thomas Skinner & Co., Ltd.* 100s.

The Register of Defunct and Other Companies. *Thomas Skinner & Co., Ltd.* 20s.

This excellent financial reference book, with its supplementary volume of defunct companies, once more makes its appearance, although belated, in its usual format. Rising costs of production, together with the restricted number of copies available owing to paper rationing, have necessitated an increase in price. As last year, the volume contains certain official statistics, publication of which was banned during the war. Mention should also be made of the inclusion of particulars regarding the Convention between the Governments of the United Kingdom and the United States of America, which was signed last year, for the avoidance of double taxation. The difficulties associated with book production have not been reflected in the volume, which appears to be up to its high pre-war standard in all respects.

Week-end Competitions

No. 881

Set by W. R.

Authors are conspicuous in the New Year Honours List by their absence. Competitors are invited to write six lines of verse suggesting an author they would like to see adorned with an honour, and giving reasons for their choice. Entries by January 14th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 877

Set by Tom Driberg

The usual prizes are offered for a verse epigram on a military correspondent's statement that "small sectional interests" must subordinate their private views and desires for a free Ashdown Forest, etc., "to the greater national need for an efficient Army."

Report by Tom Driberg

Although the verse epigram is traditionally a vehicle of irony, only a few of the numerous competitors concentrated on the obvious ironical possibilities of the military correspondent's turn of phrase; nor were those who did so the most successful.

Some entries were too earnest; some too involvedly clever; some too long (no limit to the number of lines was given, but thirty-six are surely a few too many for an epigram). Strictness of form proved a test which a number of good ideas failed to pass: A. E. Coalbran's ending ("*Make way for General Good!*") was better than the rest of his entry; Willy Tadpole also ended well: ("*. . . One corner of our land unfit For heroes to survive in*") an indifferent verse by J. A. W. had one good phrase, about Venus and Pan yielding "*priority to the expectant Mars*"; H. H. Mytton did not quite bring off a play on *copses* and *corpses*. One of several Latin entries was inaccurate, another a bit dull. W. J. Halliday thinks that Mr. Lawson is still Secretary of State for War. E. F. Watling's six ingenious lines contained at least two quotable:

While Armageddon is our public duty,
England expects no nonsense about beauty.

Three competitors pursued an unusual point which was, perhaps, best expressed by Peter Farries:

Where once we rambled, lo! a conscript comes:
He learns in woods to guard our matchless slums.

Herbert Lomas contributed a rollicking Chestertonian satire rather than an epigram. The second of his three verses ran:

. . . But soon a race of poets
Seized on the holy sod,
To the righteous indignation
Of the General Staff and God. . . .

The occasional competition setter starts out with a fine, stern resolve—not to be hypnotised by the familiar great names. In vain! Towanbucket, William Bliss, Yorick, R. J. P. Hewison, and the rest of the hierarchy edge themselves inexorably into the short list. In the end, I found most satisfying those entries which dealt with the general subject plainly, with a touch of feeling and a touch of wit. I recommend that a first prize of thirty shilllings be awarded to Terence Melican; and that ten shillings each go to E. M. S., N. P. Meadway, "Forest Row," L. G. Udall, William Bliss, Stanley J. Sharpless, Yorick, Maurice Wiltshire, and Towanbucket.

With blood we bought freedom, and now they are
selling it;
The dead sold again, while the quick prepare war.
The story's not new; we are weary of telling it;
The Flowers of the Forest have suffered before.

TERENCE MELICAN.

The ruinous war that wrecked our cities' pride
Long since has passed; and now, that war may
cease,
We desecrate our fairest countryside—
We make a solitude and call it peace.

E. M. S.

We never would dispute the Army's right
To use the land for training troops to fight;
We merely wonder, in another war
Whether the land will be worth fighting for!

N. P. MEADWAY.

ANDREDSWEAL.

Each interest its obstruction drops
When shown the commonsense of it,
How making Ashdown a closed shop's
Done purely in defence of it.

FOREST ROW.

Where private axe was wont to speed
Deep into prehistoric brain,
Where better serve the Public Need
To blow itself to bits again?

L. G. UDALL.

A Roman Emperor once consumed, they say,
A thousand lark's tongues at a meal, for he
Could satisfy his need no other way—
Soon afterwards his Empire ceased to be.

The Carthaginians drenched his shrines with blood,
Their god of murder, *Moloch*, to appease.
Your god's content with vegetable food,
They murdered children, you but murder trees.

WILLIAM BLISS.

Where foreign armies march, there's desolation,
A countryside that's ravaged and left prone;
The British have a nobler reputation,
Despoilers of no country but their own.

First, Dartmoor, then Ashdown, then large chunks of
Wales,
Blimp grabs each strategic position,
And each time we say, in our soft civvy way,
It's his last territorial ambition.

STANLEY J. SHARPLESS.

Will only rape allay your sadist greed?
Must your Efficiency be still our bane?
Will only coloured landscapes fill your need?
Can't you be satisfied with Salisbury *Plain*?

YORICK.

Sandwich, wasp and thermos flask,
From Ashdown get thee hence, I ask.
The Nation needs its beauty (s)pot
To catch the drips from Aldershot.

MAURICE WILTSHIRE.

The latest and greatest of wars to end war
Has ended by leaving us perfectly free
To learn what the beauties of England are for:
They're the playgrounds of soldiers in battles to be.

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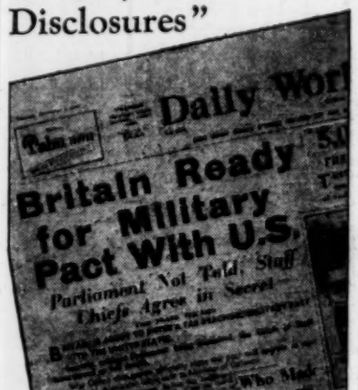

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CIVIL Service Commissioners invite applics. for appointment as Economic Specialists in Economic Intelligence Dept. of Foreign Office. Appointments fall into two categories (i) to senior grade on range of £550-£750 (men) or £450-£650 (women), plus consolidation addition of £90 (men) and £72 (women) and (ii) to junior grade on range of £250-£500 (men) or £250-£430 (women) plus consolidation additions. Appointments will be for five years, subject to satisfactory completion of short probationary period. Applicants must possess at least Sec. Class Hons. Deg. in Econs. or equiv. qualific. Applic. form from Sec., Civil Service Commission, Burlington Gardens, W.1, quoting No. 3714, to be returned by Jan. 14, 1947.

QUEEN'S University of Belfast. The Senate will shortly proceed to appoint Lecturer in Education. Salary offered is £625 p.a. rising by annual increments of £25 to £800, but comm. sal. will depend on qualifics. of successful candidate, together with contrib. pension rights under P.S.S.U. Should have deg. in Education or its equiv., and have had teaching exp. Will be expected to take up duty on October 1, 1947, or such date as may be arranged. Ten copies of applic. and testimonials should reach undersigned before Jan 31, 1947. Further parties. may be had from Richard H. Hunter, Sec.

L.C.C. Psychologist (part-time) man/woman req. at Fountain Hospital (for mentally defective children), Tooting Grove, S.W.17. Sal. scale—£356 to £350 plus cost of living addition, for five sessions of three hrs. each week. Sal. at fixed rate within scale according to qualific. and exp. Applicants must be grads. of a recog. University with appropriate qualifics. in psychology. If otherwise suitable pref given to reg. disabled persons. Applic. forms, returnable by Jan. 16, 1947, from M.O.H. (B), Mental Health Services, County Hall, Westminster, S.E.1. (3186).

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EAST Sussex Educ. Ctee. invite applics. from suitably quald. men/women for appointment as District Youth Organiser for Battle and Rye area. Should be able to drive car and, if poss., provide one. Travelling allowance paid on County Scale. Applicants should possess organising ability and should have had practical exp. of social work amongst young people. Sal. scale £350 by £12 to £470. Appointment, which is superannuable, subject to such conditions of service as may from time to time be approved by County Council. Successful candidate reqd. to pass med. exam. to satisfaction of County M.O.H. Further parties. and applic. form from undersigned, to whom applics., accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials, should be returned by Jan. 11.—J. H. Baines, Chief Educ. Officer, County Hall, Lewes.

DERBY County Borough Educ. Ctee. Wanted in Jan. for Secondary Schools Service, Mistress for Girls' Physical Educ., Needlework, Science and general class subjects. Good opening for service for teacher (a) interested in development on new lines of Mixed Sec. School, and (b) enthusiasm for educ. and welfare of children drawn from a poor and congested quarter of the town. Applics. invited only from those with sense of vocation and having sympathy with under-privileged. Burnham salary and sub. to Teachers' (Superann.) Act. Applics. (no form) giving date of birth, details of qualifics., and exp. (with dates) together with copies of three recent testimonials, to be sent to undersigned by Jan. 11.—C. Middleton, Director of Educ., Education Offices, Council House, Corporation St., Derby.

MULLARD Radio Valve Co. require senr. Radio Valve Development Engineers, degree in electrical engineering or physics essential. Exp. in valve development and valve application desirable. Salary in accordance with Company's scale, based on age, qualifics. and exp. Applics. in first inst. in writing to Works Personnel Officer, Mullard Radio Valve Co., New Road, Mitcham Junction, Surrey, reference R.a.

Appointments Vacant—continued

BRISTOL Co-op. Soc. Ltd. Applics. invited for post of Publicity Manager. Will be responsible for publicising all trading activities of Society. Must be conversant with all methods/mediums of mod. advertising and sales promotion, inc. canvassing. Membership of trade union and Society's Employees' Superann. Fund essential. Transfer clause in operation in latter connection. Applics., stating age, exp. and present post, to Bristol Co-op. Society Ltd., G.P.O. Box 64, Bristol, 1, endorsed "Publicity Manager," by Jan. 11.

HOLIDAY organization with large seaside and country guest houses has vacs. for hosts and hostesses. Interest in social services desirable and exp. catering staff control and estate management essential. Box 4219.

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EAST Sussex Educ. Ctee. Applies. invited from suitably qual. men/women for post of Leader of Battle Youth Centre. Sal. in accordance with foll. scales:—For Youth Leaders who have satisfactorily completed course of training recog. by Minister of Educ., £300×£10 to £350. For Youth Leaders who are not so quald., £270×£10 to £320. Applic. forms from undersigned on receipt of stamped add. env., must be returned accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials, by Jan. 14.—J. H. Baines, Chief Educ. Officer, County Hall, Lewes.

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BELVEDERE College. Founded 1840. Homefield Court, Seaford (Sussex). Prep. School for boys from 7 to 14 years. Beginning of term, Jan. 21. 4 open scholarships (value £50 p.a.). Examin. in London Jan. 11. Application to sit must reach Principal within first week of January.

Personal

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